Empires in Perspective

India in the French Imagination

Kate Marsh



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INDIA IN THE FRENCH IMAGINATION: PERIPHERAL VOICES, 1754–1815

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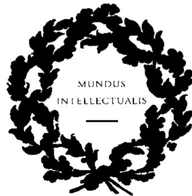
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BY

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NOTE ON TRANSLATIONS

In the interests of consistency with the texts quoted, spellings have not been modernized and the French spellings of the trading posts in India are adopted throughout this study. French writers invariably used 'Angleterre' (England) and 'les Anglais' (the English) when Britain or the British were meant. Here, 'England' and 'the English' are generally used only when translating from the French or when specific reference is made to the country. All translations are those of the author.

INTRODUCTION

Les grandes Indes

In a *mémoire* dated December 1776, written during the journey from Agra to Hyderabad, Louis Laurent de Féderbe, comte de Modave, with remarkable prescience, foretold British dominance of the geographical area the French then called *les grandes Indes*:

> Une réflexion très simple n'échappera pas aux esprits bien faits, c'est que les Anglais, aujourd'hui seuls sur ce grand théâtre, se préparent dans le secret et le silence à étendre sans mesure le rôle important qu'ils y jouent depuis que nous ne sommes plus rien.
>
> (A very simple thought will not escape all right-thinking minds: the English are today alone on the large stage of India, secretly and silently preparing to extend immeasurably their already major role, a role which they have had since we became nothing there.)[1]

His observation that the French had 'become nothing' in India was something of an exaggeration, calculated to support his contention that France should once more intervene in Indian affairs in order to prevent the expansionism of the British East India Company. But the stark opposition which he established between British power and that of the French contained an element of truth. Following the Treaty of Paris of 1763, the French presence in India had been reduced to a rump of five *comptoirs* or trading posts, Pondichéry, Karikal, Mahé, Yanaon and Chandernagor, scattered around the edges of the subcontinent. In accordance with the treaty, Louis XV agreed to renounce any further expansionist activities and to maintain the *comptoirs* without fortifications or a standing army.[2] After 1763, France had become a peripheral power in India, standing, as Modave's theatrical metaphor might have put it, in the wings while the British occupied centre stage.[3]

If French personnel in India believed that they had been marginalized, then the history of the French encounter with India has been similarly consigned to the peripheries in recent historiography of both the French and the British empires. In the historiography of French imperialism, where interest in the 'sec-

ond French empire' established under the Third Republic has predominated,[4] the history of the French in India has largely been confined to military accounts, trade histories of the French East India Company, biographies of individuals responsible for creating the *comptoirs* and detailed micro-histories of the *comptoirs* themselves.[5] Although French literary and cultural criticism has adopted a more comparative approach than is typically the case with imperial historiography, acknowledging British dominance on the subcontinent after the 1763 Treaty of Paris, such criticism tends to elide the implications of France's subordinate colonial status for the techniques of representation used in French-language texts on India.[6]

The role of India in Britain's empire, conversely, has generated an extensive and varied mass of scholarship. Administrative, political and military histories have been complemented by work on the cultural relationship between India and Britain. The intersecting relationships between imperialism, Romanticism and Orientalism in Britain between 1780 and 1850 have in recent years provided theoretical frameworks for scholars researching British cultural production.[7] Nevertheless – and as some literary critics and historians concede – before the sultans of Mysore were defeated in 1799, the establishment of British rule over India was neither inevitable nor unchallenged.[8] Not all French parties with material interests in India accepted the Treaty of Paris as irreversible; nor did the British see their dominance on the subcontinent as inevitable, as illustrated by Richard Wellesley's belligerence towards French personnel in India.[9] India continued to play a significant role in French cultural production and political thought, a role that transcended the vicissitudes of power relations and material fortunes on the subcontinent between 1754 and 1815.

Eschewing traditional periodization, which frequently divides French history and literature according to regimes (the *ancien régime*, the period of the Revolution and First Empire, and the Restoration), this study aims to illuminate continuities in representational strategies and cultural preoccupations which have previously been neglected through infelicitous periodization. Adopting a diachronic approach, spanning sixty-one years, and combining it with synchronic analyses of specific events (such as Tipu Sultan's embassy to France in 1788 and the fall of Seringapatam in 1799), it will show how certain techniques of representation were common to literary and non-literary texts alike, and how the increase of British administrative power in India functioned, paradoxically, as a means of establishing notions of French colonial identity. The timeframe is determined by the fortunes of the French in India: in 1754 French influence was at its height (a fact acknowledged by hagiographical biographies of Joseph-François Dupleix which traditionally posit that his recall to France constituted the end of any French colonial expansionist activities on the subcontinent),[10] while at the end of the Napoleonic Wars the Treaty of Paris (1815) returned the

five *comptoirs* to French control according to the conditions of the settlement of 1763, confirming France's subordinate position.[11]

Investigating the history of India as a concept in French imaginations during a crucial period of colonization is, given the essentially nebulous subject of *mentalités* and collective attitudes, methodologically problematic. To analyse textual sources is to concentrate on the small minority which constituted the French reading public in this period. Any quantitative assessment of the influence of the ideas identified is therefore tentative. The study concedes, moreover, that it would be fallacious to posit a homogeneous French national identity during the eighteenth century. Michel Antoine has rightly warned researchers against extrapolating from localized findings to draw conclusions about public opinion under Louis XV on a national scale, emphasizing the Parisian intellectual domination of the printed word.[12] Although some recent works of French history hypothesize the existence of a French national consciousness from the Middle Ages onwards,[13] the contested meaning of the phrase 'la nation française' is a tenet of this monograph, which questions how changing boundaries of national identity fit into broader patterns of social, cultural and political change.

This work defines 'French' linguistically, considering documents written in French by French personnel based either in Europe or in the French colonies.[14] It analyses the sources not as simple portrayals or reflections of the world but primarily as *dynamic* representations. As Prendergast has argued, representations 'elicit, precisely by way of their fictional modes of representation, *attitudes* to the world that enable – or disable – forms of understanding'.[15] The study examines the growing importance of a textual India,[16] revealing how narratives and strategies of representation circulated between genres and discourses, between the fictional and the factual. Paying careful attention to literary convention, political language, vocabulary shifts, the circumstances of composition and the social and institutional status of individual authors, it will demonstrate the evolution and longevity of certain ideas about India while relating such notions to the contingencies of France's position in Europe and the world.

Since the work of Said, it has become an *idée reçue* in cultural criticism to argue that French literary writing on India during the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries was dominated by the notion of India as a site of the imagination. Unconstrained as they were by the realities of colonial rule, French writers, unlike their British counterparts, 'ruminated about places that were principally *in their minds* [italics in the original]'.[17] As the analysis will demonstrate, however, the exploitation of an imaginary India was not confined to fictional discourses. *Philosophes* such as Diderot speculated that France had the potential to liberate India from the despotic British; French representatives in the *comptoirs* took the hypothesis further, arguing that it should provide a basis for French colonial policy. In his report of April 1814 to the government in Paris

concerning the state of the French trading posts in India, the comte du Blanc pressed for the restoration of French trading rights in India, justifying his argument with the curious observation that the French were regarded in India much more highly than were the British:

> En réclamant nos droits primitifs, incontestables ainsi que le doit d'une grande nation, comme la notre, nous serions réintégrés. Je regarde ce point d'autant plus essentiel que sans cesse notre ennemi jaloux, cherche à empiéter et à proscrire, le nom Français beaucoup plus aimé que le leur.
>
> (In claiming back our original incontestable rights, as well as the rights of a great nation, as is ours, we would be restored. I see this point as even more essential in that our jealous enemy unceasingly seeks to grind down and restrict the French name, which is much more loved than theirs.)[18]

L'Inde perdue

This monograph could be accused of adopting what Mary Louise Pratt has called a 'European "planetary consciousness"'.[19] The suggestion that India functioned as a space for competing discourses or even a clash of civilizations (the British and the French) might be seen to perpetuate that colonial discourse, identified by Said, which ignores the agency of Indians themselves in writing their own history. Yet to shy away from the existence of global competition between the European powers would be to neglect a vital component of the power relations which allowed colonial discourses to develop. The encounter between France and India in the eighteenth century was shaped by France's relationship with Britain. As Voltaire somewhat flippantly remarks in his *Fragments sur quelques révolutions dans l'Inde* (1773) on the War of Austrian Succession (1740–8): 'Dès que la rupture entre la France et l'Angleterre éclata, il fallut se battre dans l'Amérique et dans l'Inde, selon l'usage' (As soon as war broke out between France and England, it was necessary to fight in both America and India, as was the custom).[20]

India, like North America, was invariably conceived of as a strategic theatre in which European disputes could be played out and, while Austria was the detested 'natural enemy', Franco-British antagonism dominated the period recently dubbed the 'Second Hundred Years' War'.[21] Given the policy of *revanche* which motivated France's foreign policy between 1763 and 1783,[22] and increasing British dominance of Indian trade, India became as much a locus for exploring British alterity and assessing French national interests as it was for engaging with the inhabitants of the subcontinent.

India was thus part of a European narrative. Even as knowledge about the geography, religions (particularly Hinduism) and society of India was increasing, the loss of what was perceived as 'Dupleix's empire' was being deployed

for Gallo-centric ends. In literature, in philosophical tracts, and in letters and *mémoires* by French personnel in India, restored French rule was posited as an alternative to British despotism. By analysing these texts, it is possible to identify a counter-narrative to the model of French empire-building offered by historians of the 'second' French empire, as the *comptoirs* stimulated a continuity in French colonial thinking which undermines the historiographical division of the French imperial adventure into two discrete periods. The failure of French expansionism in India under Louis XV and Louis XVI – or *l'Inde perdue* (lost India), as the pro-colonial writer Claude Farrère dubbed it in 1935 – informed colonial thought under the Third Republic. For commentators based in the *métropole* in 1815, the French settlements were viewed as a *lieu de mémoire* of a counterfactual French rule in India.[23]

Whereas the French loss of Saint-Domingue in 1804 was until recently 'occluded' from histories of the French Revolution, the French loss of India in the eighteenth century continued to have a presence, albeit at times a marginal one, in both histories and literature. In the case of Haiti, the overthrow of French imperial rule by a slave revolt was an embarrassment that lent itself to national amnesia; in the case of India, however, a colonial rival was involved and it was possible to interpret the loss as an intra-European affair.[24] The role that this loss played in the construction of a French colonial identity has not yet been fully explored. It is this lacuna which the present study seeks to address.

Overview

Employing a comparative approach, and questioning the colonizer-versus-colonized binary which, despite attempts to revise it, persists in colonial discourse analysis, the present study posits a triangular discursive relationship between Britain, France and India.[25] It aims to challenge two assumptions. First, it questions recent theories about the generation of colonial discourses and the establishment and maintenance of power. Within French cultural production, the trope of India was employed not as a means of imposing and maintaining colonial power, but rhetorically to oppose another colonizer: France's European rival, Britain. Second, it demonstrates that, despite India's peripheral significance in terms of the French imperial and commercial system (to which the sugar-producing West Indies were far more important), the subcontinent had cultural ramifications for conceptions of 'Frenchness'. Accordingly, following an overview (Chapter 1) of the political, commercial and military relationship between France and India from the recall of Dupleix in 1754 to the end of the Napoleonic Wars, the study is schematized to expose recurring themes and strategies of representation, moving from overtly aesthetic to ostensibly factual texts.

Chapter 2 begins with an exploration of the tropes which were used in both travelogues and fictional works as a means of establishing Indian alterity. The focus then turns to how this representation of Indian alterity was distinctly French, and how the rhetoric that accompanied it posited India as a site of British alterity – an alterity characterized chiefly by a despotism to which both the French and the Indians were subjected. Finally, the chapter reveals the impact of Tipu Sultan's embassy to Versailles in 1788, considering how the arrival of Indians on French soil influenced French perceptions of India.

Chapter 3 surveys a theme familiar in literary critiques: Indian cultural identity as 'feminine'.[26] After clarifying how the tropes of feminization and female stereotypes were used in travelogues, administrative reports and histories, the chapter investigates the role of the Indian woman in contemporaneous debates on female fashion and behaviour in both Britain and France, exploring the impact of gender-specific knowledge gained in India on perceptions of French culture and mores. The final section, considering how female writers dealt with Indian alterity, reveals the complexity of reactions stimulated by contact with the subcontinent.

Chapter 4 analyses another strategy of representation: mythmaking. First discussing how the European discovery of Hinduism in the late eighteenth century generated both serious scholarship and fictional interpretations, it goes on to consider India as a signifier in the French collective imagination of a lost empire after 1763, and the mythologizing of the careers of Dupleix and Lally for specific political ends: criticism of the policies of the *ancien régime*, vitriolic attacks on the British during the Napoleonic Wars, or promoting the republican ideal of the liberating French and a civic ideal of 'Frenchness'.

Chapter 5 explores the writing of Indian history. After examining how writers such as Voltaire represented and exploited the ancient history of India, it analyses those texts (discursive accounts and popular historical plays) that portrayed the sultans of Mysore and their eventual defeat by the British in 1799. The final section studies those alternative histories of the French in India which appeared after 1763 (and, indeed, continued into the twentieth century), speculating about what India could have become under French rule.

Chapter 6 considers overtly philosophical texts on India alongside commercial and political tracts that sought to define and categorize the subcontinent. Examining philosophical debates, it traces the evolution of India from a vague signifier of oriental despotism and superstition to a means of articulating the unease about colonial expansionism which became widespread during the last decade of monarchical rule. In addition, it analyses that which was distinctive in the French response to Britain's increasing administrative responsibility on the subcontinent.

This synthetic analysis, tracing the evolution of French ideas about India and the trajectories of the political and commercial relationships between the two countries, should not be seen as overstating the importance of India to France, either culturally or politically. It aims, rather, to reveal a hitherto-neglected narrative which, when read contrapuntally with the British story of India, demonstrates the importance of competing European colonialisms to the formation of French political and cultural identities.[27]

1 THE FRENCH PRESENCE IN INDIA BETWEEN 1754 AND 1815: FROM THE 'BEAUX JOURS DU GOUVERNEMENT DE DUPLEIX' TO ANNIHILATION?

On 2 August 1754, when Dupleix handed command of the French territories in India to his successor, Charles Godeheu, French influence over Indian affairs was at its apogee. The *chef-lieu*, Pondichéry, had been expanded to form a settlement of several dozen kilometres in width; Karikal had been enlarged; in the province of Mazulipatam over one hundred and twenty kilometres of land had been obtained.[1] This was what historians writing under the Third Republic would describe, in all earnestness, as 'Dupleix's empire'; but whatever grandeur it had was to be short-lived.[2] By 1761 all of the French territories had been invaded by British East India Company forces, and the five trading posts had capitulated. The total area of the five French *établissements* or *comptoirs* (establishments or trading posts) returned to France under the terms of the Treaty of Paris (1763) measured about 56,000 hectares in total and remained this size until France formally ceded control in 1962.[3] Politically and geographically circumscribed, French influence in India was marginal in comparison with that of the British and lacked the territorial unity of the Portuguese enclave of Goa. Even before the settlement of 1763, India was a region of the world not considered vital to the French national destiny.[4] Nevertheless, French interests on the subcontinent remained. Between 1754 and 1815, France's relationship with India was conditioned by three factors: trade links, ongoing control of the *comptoirs* and European colonial rivalry.

In common with its European competitors (the English, the Portuguese, the Dutch, the Danes and the Swedes), France's encounter with India began through trade.[5] La Compagnie des Indes was created under the auspices of Jean-Baptiste Colbert in 1664, sixty-four years after the foundation of the English East India Company; Colbert expressed the desire 'procurer au royaume l'utilité du commerce [d'Asie] et empêcher que les Anglais et les Hollandais n'en profitassent seuls comme ils avaient fait jusqu'alors' (to procure for the kingdom the advan-

tages of Asian commerce and to prevent the English and the Dutch alone from profiting from it as they have up to now).[6] Following its English and Dutch exemplars, the Compagnie had a national monopoly on trade relations between the state and Indian clients, the right to maintain an army and negotiate treaties, and the authority to mint money and exercise justice.[7] The Compagnie, however, rapidly encountered financial difficulties. Colbert's demand that it create a colony in Madagascar (to rival the Dutch settlement and exploitation of Java) necessitated the recruitment of pioneers and their installation. When this failed, chiefly due to the hostility of the inhabitants of the island, more expense was incurred with the creation of an establishment on the uninhabited Ile Bourbon (later the Ile Bonaparte and finally renamed Réunion). Unable to provide its shareholders with any profit after 1680, the Compagnie ceded its monopoly to a group of merchants from Saint-Malo, under whose direction the East India trade became successful. After the War of the Spanish Succession, the profits of the group attracted the attention of the government, anxious to pay off its wartime debts. The chief finance minister, John Law, proposed the creation of a new Compagnie perpétuelle des Indes that would link together trade in the Atlantic and in Asia; it would be supported by a state bank, and its profits could be used to regulate state debt. Created in 1719, this new company had its problems. Law's *système* was precarious, relying on the multiplication of bank notes and thus generating extensive speculation. Anxious to regulate the situation, the government closed the bank, reduced the monetary mass and limited the number of shares to 56,000. To offset shareholders' dissatisfaction, the Compagnie was given the right to farm tobacco, ensuring a dividend for shareholders whatever the financial health of the Compagnie itself.[8]

Trade with India was essentially based on the importation of luxuries. Haudrère, France's leading economic historian of the Compagnie, estimates that textiles (white and blue cotton fabric, Guinea cloth, muslin, Bengal silks and painted fabric known as *indiennes*) accounted for approximately half of all imported goods, with the remainder comprising spices, incense, coffee, tea, indigo, diamonds, opium, saltpetre and other commodities.[9] From the outset, the French East India trade was only intermittently as successful as that of France's competitors the English and the Dutch, and tended to run at a deficit which was regulated by the exportation of precious metals to India. The *économiste* Ambroise-Marie Arnould, writing in 1791, described this system, whereby French coins or gold ingots were exported to India in order to purchase luxurious items for importation, as monstrous, estimating that over the preceding century, billions had flowed into the 'gouffre d'Asie' (Asian abyss).[10] The exportation of precious metals linked East Indian trade with the West Indies and the slave plantations on Saint-Domingue: *piastres* were imported to France from *la traite* in the West Indies and then exported to India and exchanged for cotton

and calicoes.[11] Of this network, the sugar islands in the West Indies were the most profitable, with Saint-Domingue regarded as the axis of the French colonial system, while India never played more than a negligible role.[12]

The success of the Indian trade was further hampered by restrictions imposed on imported cloth from India. The first prohibitive order placed on the sale of Indian goods was issued in 1688, as owners of the burgeoning French textile industry attempted to protect their wares.[13] Despite the increasing vogue for *indiennes*, the entry of such fabric into France was strictly forbidden until 1759, although the growing number of prosecutions for flouting the law suggests the inefficacy of this protectionist measure.[14] Sales of Indian goods increased, peaking between 1740 and 1755 to rival those of the British East India Company during the Austrian War of Succession; but, following the Seven Years War, commerce with Bengal and the Coromandel coast steadily declined. Troubled by mounting debts, the Compagnie rapidly deteriorated.[15] Voltaire, himself a shareholder, assessed the impact of the Seven Years War in his *Précis du siècle de Louis XV* (1763), concluding that the cost of trade with India had always far outweighed its returns:

> Enfin il n'est resté aux Français, dans cette partie du monde, que le regret d'avoir dépensé, pendant plus de quarante ans, des sommes immenses pour entretenir une Compagnie qui n'a jamais fait le moindre profit, qui n'a jamais rien payé aux actionnaires et à ses créanciers du profit de son négoce; qui, dans son administration indienne n'a subsisté que d'un secret brigandage, et qui n'a été soutenue que par une partie de la ferme du tabac que le roi lui accordait: exemple mémorable et peut-être inutile du peu d'intelligence que la nation française a eu jusqu'ici du grand et ruineux commerce de l'Inde.
>
> (Finally there remained with the French, in this part of the world, only the regret that they had spent, over the course of more than forty years, immense sums of money in the upkeep of a Company which never provided the least profit, which never paid anything from its trade profits to its shareholders and its creditors, which in its Indian administration survived only by means of secret brigandry, and which has been upheld only by the share of the farming of tobacco accorded to it by the king: a memorable and perhaps useless example of the lack of intelligence which the French nation has had up to now in the grand ruinous trade with India.)[16]

In the years preceding the liquidation of the Compagnie, there was a proliferation of *mémoires* written to the Minister of the Marine emphasizing the detriment of the India trade to the French economy.[17] Between 1725 and 1769 the Compagnie lost a total capital of 169 million *livres* and, while shareholders continued to receive a dividend from the farming of tobacco, the income from trade with India after 1763 failed to support either the costs of importation or the expenses of the Indian establishments.[18] The decision by the Government to suspend the privileges of the Compagnie on 13 August 1769 was partly a political one. Despite the debts accrued over the Seven Years War, a conflict which was

disastrous for the Compagnie, sales began to rise again between 1765 and 1768; but Étienne-François Choiseul, the French foreign minister, influenced by the *économistes*, favoured commercial freedom over the continuation of a monopoly and asserted that administrative costs were detrimental to the financial health of the Compagnie.[19] The privileges of the Compagnie were abolished by edict on 7 August 1770,[20] inaugurating a new commercial system run by private importers. Although trade with India over the life of the successive French East India companies had been beset with problems, certain commodities had become established within French society and company trade still had vocal supporters at Court and in Paris.[21] Accordingly, a new Compagnie des Indes was established in 1785. Trade temporarily prospered as the Compagnie made use of the Masacrene islands as an *entrepôt* for Indian goods, allowing merchants to benefit from a voyage time of only five months (rather than the seven or eight it took to reach the subcontinent). The new Compagnie enjoyed a monopoly on Indian trade until March 1790, when it was abolished by the Assemblée constituante. Subsequently, individual merchants began to flourish, particularly in Bordeaux and Marseille, and the commercial centre of the Indian trade moved south from the Breton ports of Lorient and Saint-Malo, and the Loire port of Nantes.[22]

While the commercial imperative was the primary motivating factor behind the French encounter with India, French political influence on the subcontinent was largely determined by the extent of territory controlled. An essential part of trade with India was the acquisition of 'concessions': land containing warehouses and shops where the Compagnie could store cargo and stock ships on arrival. Mogul law allowed foreign communities administrative and judicial autonomy (for a high price) and Europeans accepted their part in a 'suzerain-vassal system' for the commercial advantages which it afforded them.[23] The first French settlement was at Surat in 1666, but significant French gains in Indian territory did not occur until 1673, when Bellanger d'Espinay obtained from Chircam-Loudy, governor of the province, the right to establish a settlement at Pondichéry on the Coromandel coast. This was followed by the creation of *comptoirs* at Chandernagor in Bengal (1688), Mahé on the Malabar coast (1721), and Yanaon (1731) and Karikal (1739), both on the Coromandel coast. Following the Treaty of Ryswick (1697), which saw Pondichéry returned to the French following its capture by the Dutch fleet in 1693, the Compagnie decided to make Pondichéry the *chef-lieu* of all French territory in India. Work began on the construction of a fortress in 1702 and under François Martin's supervision Pondichéry developed 'an air of prosperity which it was impossible to mistake'.[24]

The intention of the Compagnie in acquiring concessions and founding French establishments was exclusively commercial: to make a profit. Territorial expansion for its own sake was avoided, a policy which was consistently espoused

by the representatives of the Compagnie.[25] As Jacques-François Law de Lauriston wrote to the Minister for the Marine in 1777:

> je conseillerai de faire entendre qu'on veut s'en tenir là; que l'intention des Français, en armant pour l'Inde, n'a jamais été que de se procurer les moyens de faire leur commerce sur un pied égal avec la nation européenne la plus favorisée par les puissances à qui les Indes appartiennent.
>
> (I would advise that it be made understood that we want to leave it there; that the intention of the French, in arming for India, has only ever been to procure the means by which to carry out trade on an equal footing with the European nation most favoured by the powers to whom India belongs.)[26]

The recall of Dupleix in 1754 demonstrates the lengths to which the Compagnie was willing to go in order to abide by this policy. Under Dupleix's governorship of Pondichéry (1742–54), the town had increased dramatically in size and, thanks to Dupleix's politicking, so had its influence. In addition to territorial gains, whereby land was given personally to either Dupleix or Charles-Joseph Patissier, marquis de Bussy and then ceded immediately to the Compagnie, Dupleix had accrued considerable political rights. The patent of nabob was granted to his predecessor, Pierre-Benoît Dumas, in 1741, in exchange for protection offered to the mother of the nabob of Trichinopoly; Dupleix became the first European to hold this title in May 1742. After his and Bussy's role in installing and maintaining Salabet Jang as the *subahdar* (governor) of the Deccan, a *fait accompli* which the Grand Mogul endorsed in mid-July 1751, Dupleix began to establish a nascent French protectorate over the vast *subah* (province) and its annexes.[27] The Compagnie's decision to recall Dupleix to France was couched in the language of commercial stability: Dupleix's expansionist actions had forced the Compagnie into 'une guerre onéreuse depuis longtemps et toujours fatale à la prospérité du commerce' (an onerous war for some time, which is always fatal to commercial prosperity).[28] Discontent among shareholders about the costs entailed by Dupleix's manoeuvres was a major factor behind the decision, as was the Court's concern that his actions would bring about another war with Britain.[29] In December 1754 his successor, Godeheu, characterized by Voltaire as a 'négociant sage et pacifique' (wise and peaceful merchant),[30] concluded an agreement which committed both the British East India Company and the French to forgo entry into conflicts between Indian princes and to renounce any ambitions for territorial expansion.[31]

The settlement established by Godeheu, which significantly reduced the prestige of the French in the eyes of the Indian princes, did not last long. When war was declared in Europe between France and Britain on 17 May 1756, the repercussions in India were soon felt. The *comptoir* of Chandernagor was seized on 23 March 1757, while in the Carnatic the French were bogged down in

prolonged battles. Under Arthur-Thomas de Lally,[32] whose abrasive leadership quickly earned him the enmity of the inhabitants of Pondichéry, the French rapidly lost the influence which Dupleix had won for them, a process exacerbated by Lally's decision to recall Bussy from the Deccan, precipitating the *subahdar*'s transferral of allegiance to the British. After Lally's withdrawal to Pondichéry, the town was besieged for fifteen months, eventually capitulating on 16 June 1761. Mahé, Karikal and Yanaon similarly fell to British troops.[33] Restored to French ownership under the Treaty of Paris (1763), the five *comptoirs* and twelve *loges* were reduced to their dimensions of 1749, stripped of the territorial gains made by Dupleix; the political influence which they could wield was therefore minimal. The British, in contrast, kept the territory which they had seized over the course of the Seven Years War. Lally was held responsible for the defeat of the French and for the loss of Pondichéry. Prosecuted and condemned to death, he was executed on 9 May 1766.

When Law de Lauriston presided over the return of Pondichéry to French possession on 11 April 1765, the town was in ruins. Although reconstruction of the town itself took place rapidly, that of the fortifications, which had been razed to the ground by the occupying British forces, took longer, hampered by severe shortages in funds. The town was also beset by equipment shortages: in 1777 Law de Lauriston reported that Pondichéry would be hard pressed to equip a battalion of four hundred men.[34] The other *comptoirs* and *loges* were in a similar condition, and the French were further impeded by the restrictive conditions of the Treaty of Paris, particularly the stipulation that France could neither maintain troops nor erect fortifications in any part of the *subah* of Bengal.[35] The case of a new drainage ditch around the *comptoir* of Chandernagor is a telling example of these limitations. The principal French settlement in Bengal, Chandernagor had become a great commercial centre under the governance of Dupleix (1731–41). Since 1741, however, the British had gained control of Bengal and Chandernagor had been reduced to little more than a commercial outpost.[36] Although the British authorities initially allowed the construction of the drainage ditch, on its completion in 1768 they obliged the French to destroy it, maintaining that it constituted a means of defence and fortification in direct contravention of the Treaty of Paris.[37] Visiting the emasculated French territory in 1773, the comte de Modave emphasized its sorry state:

> Le comptoir de Chandernagor n'est plus à présent que l'ombre de ce qu'il étoit il y a 25 ans, les stipulations de notre dernier traité avec l'Angleterre ne laissant aucune espérance raisonnable de voir changer sa situation. Il faut une guerre heureuse et dont l'effort principal soit dirigé vers ce point.
>
> (The trading post of Chandernagor is at present no more than the shadow of what it was 25 years ago, the stipulations of our last treaty with England leaving us with no

reasonable hope of seeing a change in the situation. We need a happy war of which the principal effort is aimed towards this goal.)[38]

The next war with Britain, after France entered the American War of Independence in support of the American rebels, did not, however, fulfil Modave's desires for Chandernagor. The immediate effect was British occupation of the *comptoirs*; despite Governor Guillaume de Bellecombe's valiant defence of Pondichéry, its capitulation was declared on 18 October 1778.[39] Although the French decision to open another theatre of war in India in 1780 could have yielded territorial advantages, there was little attempt during the negotiations preceding the Treaty of Versailles (1783) to improve on the 1763 settlement. Financially ruined by intervention in the American War of Independence, the Royal Government, which had taken charge of the *comptoirs* after the dissolution of the Compagnie, could not provide substantial amounts to support the trading posts or repair their fortifications. Despite the appeals of adventurers and soldiers, who regularly wrote to the Minister of the Marine advocating a more active French role in India, and reasoning that the French could establish an empire in India with relative ease, the policy adopted by Versailles was consistently one of non-intervention.[40] This position was maintained even when Tipu Sultan's ambassadors, sent to Versailles in 1788, directly solicited military aid. Instead of providing Tipu with the French forces that he requested, Louis XVI and his ministers preferred to flatter the ambassadors with fireworks and fine gifts.[41]

During the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, the precarious state of the *comptoirs* once more became axiomatic. On 14 August 1793, the Assemblée coloniale on the Ile de France, informed that Pondichéry was again under siege by the British, declared 'la patrie en danger dans les mers de l'Inde' (the homeland in danger in the Indian waters)[42] and ordered the arming of four frigates to defend Pondichéry. In a volte-face which is revealing about the impact of the Revolution on the peripheries of French territory, the Assemblée coloniale initially conceded that India was one of the many places where the fate of the Revolution would be decided, but ultimately disobeyed the orders from the *métropole*, arguing nevertheless that they were acting correctly by protecting French territory on the Ile de France.[43] The *comptoirs* themselves were overrun in rapid succession. Although the Treaty of Amiens (25 March 1802) anticipated the return of the trading posts to France,[44] by the time of General Louis-François Binot's arrival in Pondichéry (June 1803) war had again broken out in Europe. Under siege in Pondichéry, Binot capitulated.[45] The peace settlement of 1815 confirmed the first Treaty of Paris of 1814, restoring the *comptoirs* to French control; forbidden under Article 12 to maintain either troops or fortifications, the *comptoirs* remained French possessions but were demilitarized, geographically dispersed and economically dependent on surrounding British territory.[46]

French commerce and the fortunes of the *comptoirs* were thus closely linked with the interplay of European rivalries on the subcontinent and in the wider world. While trade between Europe and the subcontinent was mediated by various East India Companies, the status of these companies as national associations necessarily constrained the representatives according to the foreign policies of their respective governments. The outbreak of war invariably had repercussions in the European colonies in India and the Americas.[47] The history of Pondichéry, captured by the Dutch fleet in 1693 and occupied four times by British forces, demonstrates the strategic importance that company representatives accorded to the territory of their competitors. This notwithstanding, the political situation in India was constantly shifting: while the remainder of Mogul imperial authority was based in Delhi, the power of the Marathas, Persians and Afghans was increasing, there were conflicts between semi-independent Muslim noble princes, and European forces (British, French and Dutch) played out rivalries of their own. This instability, coupled with the distance between Europe and India, meant that company representatives enjoyed a certain freedom, with the possibility of engaging in actions which were contrary to those desired by the directors.[48]

The career of Dupleix provides a pertinent example of this quasi-autonomy. While Dupleix and other Compagnie representatives carried out an expansionist strategy, the overriding policy in Versailles during this period was not territorial aggrandizement but the protection of trading rights. The foreign ministers Choiseul, Anne Robert Jacques Turgot and Charles Gravier Vergennes consistently advocated preserving existing French territory rather than expanding it.[49] Where India was concerned, however, French strategy could not be divorced from political contingency: rivalry with Britain was a constant determinant.[50] Of the six decades between 1754 and 1815, France was at war with Britain for almost three;[51] while British historians have analysed how war with France dominated and moulded the modern British empire, the concomitant influence on the French 'empire' has been overlooked.[52] Following France's disastrous defeat in the Seven Years War, which saw the French fleet virtually wiped out and primacy over the seas ceded irrevocably to *la perfide Albion*, the question of how France was to recover its lost prestige and restore the balance of power in Europe predominated in foreign policy thinking until at least 1778.[53] Where plans were made for intervention in Indian affairs, they were motivated not by any desire for French expansion or the recovery of an Indian 'empire', but by the pragmatic imperative to limit British power.[54] Turgot, for example, a proponent of direct intervention in the East during the American War of Independence, argued in 1778 for a restoration of commercial parity: military action in India while England was preoccupied in America would recover French trading rights and limit English influence on the subcontinent.[55]

After 1783, as the monarchy endured increasing financial difficulties, ministerial interest declined in the possible advantage to be won against the British in India, as, indeed, did investment in the French enclaves themselves. Despite the successes achieved by the French forces in India between 1778 and 1783, notably the naval victory of Admiral Pierre André de Suffren over the British, the Treaty of Versailles was not used as an opportunity to press for more Indian territory.[56] In 1784 Vergennes exhibited a similar cautiousness regarding territorial gain, rejecting a proposal for conquering Egypt as a recompense for India, although the plan was later taken up by Napoleon Bonaparte.[57] The Treaty of 1783 was seen by some commentators at the time as a missed opportunity; critics writing under later regimes saw it as symptomatic of the failings of the monarchy.[58] In his report to the Ministry for the Marine in 1800, the Commissaire for the Marine, Launay, characterized the Treaty of Versailles as 'humiliating':

> C'est, dis-je, en 1783 époque glorieuse pour la nation français dans l'Inde que s'est conclu en Europe un traité de paix humiliant pour elle, qui étoit triomphante à la cote Coromandel, où les Anglais étoient abaissés.
>
> (It was, I tell you, in 1783, a glorious time for the French nation in India, that there was concluded in Europe a peace treaty so humiliating for the French, who were triumphant on the Coromandel coast, where the English were humiliated.)[59]

Although certain Indian princes still viewed France as a potential ally against the British, the French commitment to expelling the British from India was more rhetorical than material. Government representatives under the Directoire, like those under Louis XVI, stressed the insecure position of the French on the subcontinent. In a *mémoire* to the Directoire in 1796, Louis Monneron conceded the financial burden that the *comptoirs* placed on the state, but emphasized their economic potential as a captive market for the export of French goods. Above all, however, he cautioned against provoking the English.[60] In the same year, the Directoire instructed Monneron to reopen negotiations with Tipu Sultan of Mysore, who had provided valuable aid to the French during the American War of Independence. Once again, developments in India proceeded independently of central policy. François Ripaud, a Jacobin who passed himself off as an officer, arrived in Seringapatam in 1797 and promised Tipu ten thousand French soldiers, earning in return the right to establish a Jacobin club on Indian soil. Tipu later dispatched him along with two ambassadors to the Assemblée coloniale on the Ile de France, but the governor of the island failed to provide any material assistance.[61] Consequently, the deliverance of Mysore from the threat of British dominance was never achieved. Arriving in Egypt, Napoleon Bonaparte pledged to liberate Tipu from the 'yoke' of the English, but did not act upon his promise.[62] His letter to Tipu of April 1799, intercepted by the British East India Company, instead provided proof of complicity between two of Britain's most

despised enemies.[63] The storming of Seringapatam on 4 May 1799 by British East India Company troops and Crown forces, resulting in the death of Tipu Sultan, marked Britain's victory over the state of Mysore after four wars that spanned a period of thirty-two years. For the French in Egypt, meanwhile, the Palestinian offensive ran into difficulty and the Armée d'Orient faced increasing opposition on the ground. Napoleon left Egypt on 23 August 1799 and returned to France. Plans for territorial conquest in the East were then suspended (until the creation of 'Indochina' under the Third Republic), and India effectively ceased to be a theatre for Anglo-French military rivalry.

Alongside this grand narrative of the French in India, it is possible to trace numerous micro-narratives of military adventurers, independent traders, astronomers, *savants* and missionaries who travelled to and lived in India.[64] In contrast with the first half of the eighteenth century, when the presence of the French had been concentrated and structured around the *comptoirs*, after 1763 it became more varied and diffuse. The suppression of the Jesuits in France in 1764 necessarily curtailed the activities of missionaries in Pondichéry and Karikal, but the number of adventurers working for Indian princes grew throughout the period.[65] The series of defeats endured by the French during the Seven Years War left on Indian soil hundreds of French nationals and *francophones* (as in the case of the Swiss Antoine Polier) available for private hire by Indian princes.[66] Organized into French brigades in the states of Mysore, Hyderabad and Hindustan, these men were a cause of great concern to officers of the East India Company.[67] Independent from the *métropole*, and frequently acting contrary to the policies advocated by Versailles (under Louis XV and Louis XVI) and Paris (post-1789), these adventurers brought new French ideas to the Indian theatre. Ripaud's founding of the Jacobin Club in Seringapatam on 16 May 1797, for example, introduced French Revolutionary ideals to Mysore; boasting a membership of fifty-nine Frenchmen in the pay of Tipu, the club collectively witnessed the reading of the declaration of the *Droits de l'homme* and the planting of a liberty tree at its inaugural meeting.[68] Reflecting the political turmoil which the Revolution had brought to continental France, however, Benoît de Boigne, a Savoyard and former officer in the French army, in the service of the Marathas, retained his royalist loyalties and, after the annexation of Savoy in 1793, made certain that his troops fought under the red and white Savoy flag rather than the *tricolore*.[69]

Historical writing on the French story in eighteenth-century India has been somewhat erratic. Le Tréguilly and Morazé, in their detailed but generically limited bibliography of sources, bemoan the 'nombre de publications sur l'Inde française [qui] ne sont en effet que des ouvrages de vulgarisation, parfois à la limite de littérature enfantine' (number of publications on French India [which] are in effect non-academic works sometimes verging on children's stories).[70] There is a marked divide between historians who contend that the French effectively

departed India after the defeat that they sustained in the Seven Years War,[71] and those who argue that after 1763 the French were plotting the recovery of their empire and would have succeeded were it not for the disinterest of the monarchy.[72] Both views are misleading. Neither Versailles under the monarchy, nor the successive republican and imperial regimes, ever had a coherent policy aiming to recover the French 'empire' in India.[73] Debates about the periodization of French territorial loss in India tend to obscure the persistence, both in metropolitan circles (among ministers, traders and philosophers) and on the colonial periphery, of debates about India and its relationship (commercial or otherwise) with France. What emerges from the extensive corpus of documents studied here is a preoccupation with India that was not equalled by that other loss under the terms of 1763: *nouvelle France* (Canada).[74]

Writing in 1797, citoyen Guillaume Bonnecarrère argued that British perceptions of the French presence in India bore little relation to the commercial and political power that the French were able to exercise:

> Malgré son abbaissement et sa foiblesse, la Nation française a toujours depuis la paix de 1763, excité la jalousie et la crainte du Gouvernement anglais à la côte Coromandel.
>
> (Despite its humiliation and its weakness, the French Nation has excited the jealousy and the fear of the English Government on the Coromandel coast ever since the peace of 1763.)[75]

Irrespective of violent regime change in France, the French presence in India was invariably seen through the prism of continental European concerns and rivalries.[76] Under the *ancien régime* a similar observation had been made regarding French power. In one of the numerous *mémoires* written in defence of Lally, it was conceded that European influence in India was a matter of perception rather than material strength alone:

> Un malheur réel pour la Compagnie dans la perte de Pondichéry, est que les Princes de l'Inde sont aujourd'hui convaincus que les forces maritimes des Anglais sont de beaucoup supérieures aux nôtres.
>
> (A real misfortune for the Compagnie with the loss of Pondichéry is that the Indian princes are today convinced that the English maritime forces are greatly superior to our own.)[77]

Perception of French influence, or indeed lost influence, was a constant preoccupation; in 1815, as in 1754, any interpretation of French prestige on the subcontinent was assessed with a sidelong glance at France's neighbour across the channel.

2 CONSTRUCTING INDIA AS *OTHER*: FICTION, TRAVELOGUES AND AMBASSADORS

Twentieth-century critics of eighteenth-century fictional representations of India were less than flattering about what the eminent Indologist Sylvain Lévy, writing in 1930, disparaged as 'des exercices littéraires ... Inde des Rajas, Inde des fakirs, Inde des bayadères' (literary exercises ... India of the Rajas, India of the fakirs, India of the *bayadères*).[1] Although several anthologies written in French have made passing reference to the number of eighteenth-century literary works claiming to be set in India, they often hastily dismiss such representations with the caveat that the 'India' in question is one of which 'les géographes ont perdu de vue' (geographers have lost sight).[2] Yet, while the writers of these overtly fictional texts frequently had only a vicarious experience of what Mary Louise Pratt terms the 'contact zone' (the space where cultures 'meet and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination'),[3] their fiction contributed to the generation of meaning surrounding the term '*Inde*'. As Murr established in 1983, there were three important sources of information about India: Jesuit missionary letters (collated and published as *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses, écrites des missions étrangères, par quelques missionnaires de la compagnie de Jésus* between 1707 and 1776); *savants* who travelled to India, such as the *académicien* Guillaume le Gentil de la Galaisière in 1761; and the *philosophes*' discursive explorations.[4] By neglecting fictional representations, however, Murr overlooks an important medium which contributed to the cultural and ideological presuppositions evoked by the word 'India' and which governed the narrative shapes that could be used to represent it. If, as Embree has so cogently argued, India is a Western imaginative construct, and for 'over two thousand years a constellation of ideas and images associated with the word has been part of the intellectual heritage of the Western world',[5] it is only by engaging with the range of discourses and genres which used the construct that its role in French imaginings during the late eighteenth century can be fully explored.

Even before the establishment of trading rights in Asia, and the publication of pioneering travellers' accounts by François de la Boullaye le Gouz (1657), François Bernier (1670–1), Jean Chardin (1686), Jean de Thévenot (1684) and

Jean-Baptiste Tavernier (1676), French interest in India was significant.[6] Along with missionaries' letters, the proliferation of published travelogues during the eighteenth century provided fiction writers with information that contributed to the notional territory of India.[7] Frequently, travel accounts presented themselves as containing all available knowledge on non-European societies; as the preface to abbé Prévost's sixteen-volume compendium of travel writing claims:

> Cet Ouvrage contient ce qu'il y a de plus remarquable, de plus utile, & de mieux avéré, en Europe, en Asie, en Afrique & en Amérique, dans les Pays où les Voyageurs ont pénétré ... Pour former un système complet d'Histoire & de Géographie moderne qui représentera l'état actuel de toutes les Nations.
>
> (This study contains all that is the most remarkable, the most useful, & the most indispensable, in Europe, Asia, Africa & America, in the countries that travellers have entered ... In order to form a complete system of modern history and geography representing the present state of all nations.)[8]

In other words, as Pratt asserts, travel writing essentialized non-European parts of the world and created a 'domestic subject' for consumption by Europeans.[9]

There is a general critical consensus that 'eighteenth-century portraits of the oriental world as an exotic, uncivilized counterpart of Europe were crucial enunciations of the discourses that produced representations of the European world as knowing, stable and powerful'.[10] As the philosophers of the eighteenth century coined the notion of 'civilization', so its antithesis, the 'exotic' (and its synonym 'barbarism'), became important. Civilized Europe was contrasted with the strangeness of elsewhere; as Antoine Furetière cautioned in his 1699 *Dictionnaire universel*, the word 'exotic' 'ne se dit que dans le dogmatique, & signifie, Estranger. Il ne se faut pas se servir de termes *exotiques* & barbares' (is said only in the dogmatic, & means Outsider. The two terms *exotic* & barbaric must not be used together).[11] By the eighteenth century, traditional views of India as a land of monsters and marvels had been modified as a result of individuals' travels and France's financial and military experiences there.[12]

Beginning with an examination of the specific images which were used to signify the alterity of India, this chapter will analyse travellers' accounts in conjunction with fictional *contes* and novels. As Catherine Weinberger-Thomas points out in her study of Western incomprehension and representation of the Hindu rite of *sati*, certain features were a '*topos* du voyage en Orient, devenu à l'époque des Lumières une figure du discours sur le despotisme asiatique' (*topos* of travel in the Orient, and became during the Enlightenment a figure in the discourse on Asian despotism),[13] and that, in the particular case of *sati*, 'le phénomène échappe à toute perception par sa transmutation instantanée en stéréotype culturel ou en thème de scandale' (the phenomenon escaped all understanding by its instantaneous transformation into a cultural stereotype or

a scandalous theme).[14] There is abundant evidence of stereotypes denoting India and its inhabitants, stereotypes which undermine authenticity, essentialize the Indian and simultaneously provide a 'limited form of otherness' and a primary means of 'subjectification' of both colonizer and colonized.[15] It does not follow, however, that these persistent and recurring images were used in a monolithic way to tell a univocal story of India. The transposition of key images from travellers' narratives into the realm of fiction exposes intellectual assumptions about India, emphasizing the inherently textual nature of the construct.

Following this overview of themes associated with the well-worn notion of otherness, the critical focus turns to examining how this notional India was used to explore European, as well as Indian, identities. Since the publication of *Orientalism* in 1978, Said's thesis that the Orient is constantly represented as Europe's inferior other has been challenged as oversimplified and generalizing, with its divisive binarism being the object of particular censure.[16] The construction of India in the French imagination defies such dualistic categorization, because it was as closely concerned with establishing oppositional European identities as it was Indian alterity.

The final section considers how French constructions of India were tested by the arrival of Tipu Sultan's ambassadors in France in 1788. Examining the multiple texts (official memoranda, memoirs and newspaper accounts) published at the time of the ambassadors' visit, the analysis will demonstrate that direct contact with the 'Indian other' in the final years of Louis XVI's reign consolidated rather than undermined preconceived images of India, and that pejorative strategies of representation were reinforced.

Travel Writing and Storytelling

Between 1754 and 1815 at least 30 fictional works were published which claimed to be set in India, along with 135 travel accounts.[17] In addition, the *recueils* of the *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses, écrites des missions étrangères, par quelques missionnaires de la compagnie de Jésus* (published until 1776) contained two letters from Père Cœurdoux in India, although the later collections were dominated by letters from parts of the world other than India.[18] Considered synthetically, these texts reveal that, in the French imagination, the signifier India was associated with a collection of images that designated its otherness, and that the assumptions on which these images were based transcended generic divisions. Despite what the French historian Jean-Marie Lafont has dubbed the 'Indomania' of the 1760s (an appellation which he justifies by listing the so-called Indian texts, both authentic and fake, available in Paris),[19] the tropes associated with India had already been established by the middle of the century. In order to convey

a convincing picture of India, travel accounts and fictional narratives had to include certain features.[20]

Alongside the feminine images of India (such as the *sati* and the *bayadère*) which will be considered in the following chapter, notions about certain figures (fakirs, Brahmins), belief systems (reincarnation), social structures (the caste system) and ideas (voluptuousness and sexual availability) distinguished India from the more generalized image of the Orient. Narrative shapes evolved as knowledge of Hindu and Muslim societies developed, stimulated by the increase of French soldiers, scholars and traders in India, and the transformation of the British East India Company into a more identifiable governing body.[21] The generic oriental despot, who had been a recurring figure in fictional narratives during the mid-eighteenth century, came to be replaced by rapacious Europeans (particularly Britons) exploiting the Hindu population of India. Notwithstanding the influence of historical contingency and the accrual of geographical knowledge, however, markers of otherness and fantastical discourses persisted throughout the period.

Thus, the 'fakir', a Muslim or Hindu beggar regarded as a holy man, functions both as a synecdoche for the otherness of India, and as a marker of the unease which is provoked by perceptions of difference. In Voltaire's writings, the fakir is the epitome of religious corruption, adduced in the *Dictionnaire philosophique* (1764) to exemplify 'amour-propre' (pride), his extreme suffering serving to assure a better fate in the next life rather than to further a spiritual goal.[22] Even in those accounts which do not use the fakir for an overt philosophical or anticlerical end, representations display the same suspicion and incomprehension of such 'foreign' practices.

In the anonymous *Tableau historique de l'Inde* (1771), the author prefaces his account by advertising his credentials for discussing India:

> C'est, Lecteur, sur ces nations si éloignées de nos climats, que j'entreprends de vous donner quelques détails; je les ferai avec précision; je ne hasarderai rien. Tout ce que je vais parcourir, je l'ai puisé sur les lieux mêmes. La politique, le gouvernement, les mœurs, la religion, formeront autant de sujets intéressans pour l'histoire. Jamais je n'écarterai de la vérité. Pour toutes ces choses, je demande une indulgence nécessaire: un Militaire qui a vécu huit ans aux grandes Indes n'est pas un Ecrivain fort élégant.
>
> (It is, Reader, on these nations so far away from our climes, that I undertake to give you some details; I will do this with precision; I will chance nothing. All that you are going to encounter I have drawn from the place itself. The politics, the government, the mores, the religion, will equally form the interesting subjects of this history. I will never stray from the truth. For all these things, I ask the necessary indulgence: a military man who has lived for eight years in the East Indies is not a very elegant Writer.)[23]

In addition to such prefatory claims to authenticity, his account is punctuated with critical remarks about 'armchair' travellers, and writers who boast of knowledge about India but in fact rely entirely on their imagination supplemented by incorrect accounts. For example, opening his chapter on 'Des Pagodes. Des Pandarons & des Fakirs', he asserts:

> On confond tout dans notre Europe: un Auteur travaille dans son cabinet; il consulte souvent un voyageur ignorant ou abusé; il porte sa feuille à l'Imprimeur; & content de lui-même, il croit avoir donné une juste définition des choses, quand au contraire, il n'a fait qu'entasser erreur sur erreur.
>
> (We confuse everything in our Europe: an Author works in his study; he frequently consults an ignorant or mistaken traveller; he takes his manuscript to the Printer; & happy with himself, he believes that he has given an exact definition of things when, on the contrary, he has merely added error to error.)[24]

Yet, despite such condemnation, his assessment of 'Pagodas, Pandarons, and Fakirs' resonates strongly with established assumptions. According to the author of the *Tableau historique*, fakirs are the 'sang-sues de l'Inde, qui poussent souvent la cruauté jusqu'à priver de leur substance de malheureuses veuves qui sont obligées de leur abandonner ce qu'ils ont pris la peine de leur demander' (bloodsuckers of India, who frequently take their cruelty to such extremes that they deprive unfortunate widows of the means of living, obliging the widows to abandon to them all that has been asked under great duress). He concludes with the observation that 'Ces Fakirs sont ordinairement fort charlatans' (These Fakirs are normally great charlatans), a conclusion which is not dissimilar to that offered in Voltaire's fictional representation of a fakir in the *conte* 'Lettre d'un Turc sur les Fakirs et sur son ami Bababec' (1750).[25]

Throughout the second half of the eighteenth century, travel accounts similarly emphasized the organization of Hindu society into castes.[26] While all travellers agreed that these divisions were a necessary part of Hindu society, their conclusions differed about the practice. In simple quantitative terms, there was disagreement over how many castes existed. Whereas Abraham Hyacinthe Anquetil Duperron, travelling mainly in the south of the subcontinent on the Malabar coast, identified five principal castes, the anonymous author of the *Tableau historique* claimed that were as many as seventy-four.[27] Nor was there any consensus regarding the origins or the morality of the caste system. Modave, whose travels were concentrated in northern India, argues that: 'C'est la religion qui établit parmi ce peuple la différence des castes qui est le grand fondement de leur état civil' (It is religion which has established amongst these people caste differences which is the fundamental principle of their civil society).[28] Pierre Sonnerat, in contrast, equates the caste system with tribalism and posits that it has analogies in all nations, even those in Europe:

> La plupart des Nations étoient divisées de même; l'Égypte avoit sept tribus, Athènes quatre, & l'Arabie trois, entre lesquelles les Prêtres étoient les plus considérés: les Romains avoient deux classes de Citoyens; presque tous les États de l'Europe, à l'imitation de l'Inde, admettent des distinctions dans leur Corps civil; & nous qui les blâmons, sommes-nous plus justes & plus sages; n'avons-nous pas nos Castes?
>
> (The majority of Nations were divided in the same way; Egypt had seven tribes, Athens four, & Arabia three, amongst which the Priests were considered most highly: the Romans had two classes of Citizens; nearly all the States of Europe, in the manner of India, allow distinctions amongst their civil society; & we who condemn them, are we more just & wise; have not we our own Castes?)[29]

The fact that the geographical and social nomenclature of travellers' accounts became central to fictional representations is evidence of how far the image of India had become essentialized by the middle of the eighteenth century. Frequently, the attendant tropes were used as a form of literary shorthand to establish an exotic setting quickly. For example, in Jean-Baptiste Milcent's 'Thiamis, ou la métempsycose, conte indien' (1776), the Indian identity of the hero, Thiamis, is suggested with a reference to Brama in the opening pages, while his successive transformations are given narrative realism through the geographical locus of India, the home of metempsychosis.[30] In the earlier *Mirza et Fatmé, conte indien, traduit de l'Arabe* (1754), by Bernard-Joseph Saurin, the Indian setting is evoked through the despotic figure of the Grand Visir.[31] In her seminal work of 1946, *L'Orient Romanesque en France (1704–1789)*, Marie-Louise Dufrenoy argued that the Orient functioned as a stimulus to the imagination, an authorized source of satire and a means of comparison.[32] Thus in both the Revolutionary tale, Bodard de Tezay's 'Le dernier cri du monstre, vieux conte indien' (1789), and Auguste Ledrut's pro-monarchy verses *Les Éléphants détronés et rétablis, Apologue historique indien* (1814), the adjective 'indien' is divorced from the geographical referent and functions as a vehicle for politically risky analogy and analysis.[33] Unlike the Orient more generally, however, the adjective 'indien' was frequently appended to licentious and libidinous tales. For example, Charles de la Morlière's *Angola: Histoire indienne* (1746), Saurin's *Mirza et Fatmé* (1754), Laurent Marcilly's *Zelindor et Zaïre. Traduction indienne* (1755), Nicolas Bricaire de La Dixmerie's *Le Livre d'Airain, Histoire indienne* (1759) and Stanislas de Boufflers's 'La reine de Golconde' (1761)[34] all make use of the vagueness of the geographical area named *les grandes Indes* (the East Indies) to exploit the sexual availability of the Indian woman. In the case of *Mirza et Fatmé* and *Angola*, the *contes* also contain fairies, inviting the reader to approach them as works of pure fantasy.[35] Falling into that genre known as 'livres philosophiques', and displaying typical features such as fabricated publishers and sources (or both, in the case of Marcilly's *Zelindor*), these *contes* enjoyed a short-lived popularity with the reading public, if not the conservative *L'Année littéraire*, in the two decades preceding

the Revolution.[36] The prolific references to sexual practices are, however, significant, resonating with ideas about the occult sexual activity of Hindu women which had been apparent as early as 1653 in la Boullaye le Gouz's travelogue, *Les Voyages et Observations du Sieur de la Boullaye Le-Gouz*.[37] By the time of the publication of François-Joseph-Michel Noël's *Dictionnaire de la Fable* (1801), the 'lingam' merits an entry as representative of all 'shameful' Hindu sexual customs, in which it is reported that young women achieve their first act of penetration by means of the phallic statue:

> Dans le royaume de Canara, et aux environs de Goa, les Indiens conduisent les nouvelles mariées, dans le temple de leur Priape, et lui offrent les prémices de ces jeunes femmes, comme une offrande digne de lui.
>
> (In the kingdom of Canara, and in the area surrounding Goa, Indians take their newly married women to the temple of their Priapus, and offer him these young girls' virginity, as an offering worthy of him.)[38]

Although libertine *contes* are fantastical representations of India, belonging to the sub-genre of erotic fiction which was popular in the second half of the eighteenth century, they were genealogically developed from so-called eyewitness accounts which stress the voluptuousness of India,[39] demonstrating that the association of India with sexual fantasy transcended generic boundaries.

Constructing Identities: British and European Others

While representations of India provide evidence of the collective fantasies, judgements and images employed to convey the alterity of the subcontinent, they simultaneously demonstrate how the writing of India was used to construct the otherness of Europeans. As the British East India Company increased its territorial and administrative control during the second half of the eighteenth century, French representational strategies were transformed and the discourse of alterity became polyvalent. James Clifford has postulated (and it is now a generally accepted truism in 'cultural studies') that 'every version of an "other", wherever found, is also the construction of a "self"'.[40] To posit that those images which essentialize the Indian are self-reflexive about the French 'self' may therefore appear at best axiomatic, at worst redundant. The texts which were produced after 1754, however, reveal that this self-reflexive quality is generated by placing the French self in opposition not only to the Indian but also to European others.

As J. S. Bratton has argued with reference to nineteenth-century British theatre, dramatic representations contributed 'vividly and powerfully' to the web of meaning surrounding British encounters with India.[41] In eighteenth-century France, similarly, plays such as Antoine-Marin Lemierre's *La Veuve du Malabar ou l'Empire des coutumes* (1770) relied on lavish stereotypes as a means of con-

veying an authentic Indian setting and thus further propagated those stereotypes in the public imagination. The action of the play centres on the unwillingness of the heroine, Lanassa, to carry out the act of *sati*, and her ultimate rescue by a French general.[42] In light of the production of the play after 1763, and the unfavourable territorial settlement to which the French agreed at the end of the Seven Years War, the closing lines suggest the influence of political events, favourably contrasting a counterfactual French rule in India with the violence of other European powers:

Des faveurs de mon roi recevez pour prémices
L'entière extinction d'un usage inhumain.
Louis, pour l'abolir, s'est servi de ma main.
En se montrant sensible autant qu'il est né juste,
La splendeur de son règne devient plus auguste.
D'autres chez les vaincus portent la cruauté,
L'orgueil, la violence; et lui, l'humanité.

(Receive the favours of my king as the beginnings
Of the entire extinction of an inhuman custom.
Louis, to abolish it, has used my hand.
And showing himself as sensitive as he was born just,
The splendour of his reign becomes more august.
While others, to the defeated, bring cruelty,
Pride and violence, he brings humanity.)[43]

Plays which historicized the recent past in India frequently counterpointed a French identity with that of the cruel British. This was particularly the case in plays produced after 1799 which narrated the fall of France's ally Tipu Sultan. Yet, while these plays do exhibit jingoism,[44] and were influenced by contemporaneous concerns, the technique of oppositional identity formation using both the British and France's other continental European neighbours is a strategy of representation which began long before the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars.

This is evident as early as 1758. In Madame de Benouville's *Les Pensées errantes, avec quelques lettres d'un Indien* (1758), the geographical situation of India is vague; although the paratexts, particularly the footnote definitions, appear to ground in reality the epistolary exchange between the Indian Zurac and the Moor Zegri, the area in question bears little resemblance to the landmass that the first edition of the *Encyclopédie ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences des arts et dés métiers* (1751) had attempted to define.[45] But these paratexts are not an apparatus of authenticity; rather, they are a means of quickly establishing the otherness of the correspondents and how they behave outside European conventions. Having identified Zurac and Zegri as exotic, the letters focus on the shortcomings of Europeans. In the first letter, all European travellers are homogenized, described as being motivated by greed: 'tous ces gens de l'autre

bout-du-monde, que l'avarice attire dans nos Contrées' (all these people from the other end of the world, who are attracted out of avarice to our lands).[46] After Zurac has been removed from India and transported to Portugal by his Portuguese master, Dom Alphonse, in letter 4, the letters function in a manner similar to that of Montesquieu's more famous epistolary novel *Lettres persanes* (1721): a means of reflection on European society. Unlike Montesquieu's Persians, however, Benouville's Indian does not travel to France; his experience of Europe is restricted to Portugal and Spain. In a further contrast with Montesquieu's fiction, where the Persian traveller functions as a tool of humorous philosophical self-reflection, Zurac is used to reflect on the barbarity of France's neighbours, particularly the savagery of the Inquisition (letters 8 and 9).

Voltaire's epistolary novel *Les Lettres d'Amabed* (1763) serves a similar purpose, although the philosophical agenda, specifically Voltaire's ardent anticlericalism and his belief in Indian civilization as the oldest in the world, is overt. The work was unfavourably received, with Diderot dismissing it as a 'rabâchage de toutes les vieilles polissonneries' (repetition of all the old mischief) of the author.[47] Composed of letters between either Amabed, who is in Goa when the Portuguese arrive, or his betrothed Adaté, and Shastasid, 'Grand Brame de Maduré', the letters emphasize the relative civility of the Indian peoples in comparison with the invading Europeans, and particularly the Portuguese. A Portuguese Dominican priest, having falsely befriended Amabed and Adaté, betrays them to the Inquisition before raping Adaté and her maid, Déra. Contrary to the Saidian binarism, the reports of these incidents, written by perceived 'savages', the Indian *épistoliers*, show the barbarity of Europe, the corruption of the Catholic church and (by employing an ancient Indian dating system) the inaccuracies of Judeo-Christian histories of the world. The narrative ends *in medias res* after the arrival of the Indians in Rome and the welcoming of the Dominican priest as a saint for his mendacious claims of the successful conversion of so many Indians to Catholicism.

In these two fictional examples, significantly, the targets of the authorial satire are Spain and Portugal. While all Europeans are considered rapacious,[48] the emphasis on the barbarity of the Inquisition places the focus firmly on the Iberian Peninsula. As the influence of the British East India Company increased, however, and notably after the settlement of 1763, the focus of othering shifted to the British – a shift which was evident in both fictional and factual representations, regardless of genre or the conditions of production.

In his 1768 *mémoire*, *Le Politique Indien ou considérations sur les colonies des Indes orientales*, abbé Roubaud considered the English the 'nouveaux Maîtres de l'Inde' (new masters of India).[49] By 1780, when the comte Duprat published his account of his travels in India, British dominance was posited as firmly

established. According to Duprat, however, the outlook for the French was not entirely negative:

> Pendant deux mois de séjour à Pondichery, j'étudiai beaucoup le caractere des Indiens. C'est un peuple doux, timide, facile à tromper, quoique méfiant; inconséquent, peu actif, fort ignorant dans l'art de la guerre, se croyant toujours battu dès qu'il est attaqué; ce qui fait qu'il se défend mal. J'observai très exactement les Anglois; je voyois qu'ils y faisoient les plus grandes choses sans employer de grands moyens; je voyois aussi qu'ils étoient détestés, quoiqu'on me dît chaque jour qu'ils étoient nos maîtres; à quoi je répondois qu'il étoit bien dur d'en convenir, & que je croyois, au contraire, qu'avec des vertus nous pourrions parvenir à nous faire aimer plus qu'ils ne l'étoient.
>
> (During a two-month stay in Pondichéry, I studied the character of the Indians a great deal. They are a gentle, timid, easily deceived, if suspicious, people; inconsequential, hardly active and highly ignorant in the art of warfare, always believing themselves to be beaten as soon as they are attacked; this means that they defend themselves badly. I observed the English very carefully; I saw that they did the greatest of things there without employing very great means. I saw also that they were detested, even though it was said to me every day that they were our masters; to which I replied that it was very difficult to agree with such a situation, & that I believed, on the contrary, that with our virtues we would be able to make ourselves loved more than they were.)[50]

British dominance meant that the French felt subordinated to their rival even in their own enclave of Pondichéry. This physical dominance notwithstanding, Duprat contends that the French are morally superior to both the Indians and the British, even implying a potential to become the loved masters of India through the virtue of the French character alone.

British alterity was also evident in *mémoires* sent to the Ministère de la Marine. In 'Observations sur l'état politique actuel de l'Inde', a report of February 1777, Law de Lauriston exploits perceived British difference to reinforce his political argument.[51] Although he is keen to essentialize Indians as effeminate and weak ('ce sont des Indiens, et par ce mot on entend des hommes lâches, efféminées, incapables de devenir bons soldats' (they are Indians, and by this word it is understood that they are pusillanimous men, effeminate, incapable of becoming good soldiers)),[52] he links their misfortunes under British rule with those of the French in India; the Indian powers of Bengal, Lucknow and Allahabad (among others),[53] and the French freedom to trade, are depicted alike as suffering under the 'joug' (yoke) of the English:

> Enfin, après tant d'années, il paraît aujourd'hui qu'on veut s'occuper sérieusement des moyens de secouer le joug honteux sous lequel des malheureuses circonstances nous ont forcé de plier.
>
> (Finally, after so many years, it seems today that we want to deal seriously with the means of shaking off the shameful yoke to which we have been forced to submit by unfortunate circumstances.)[54]

The repetition of the noun 'yoke' is significant, as it stresses the relationship between French liberty (to trade) and Indian liberty: both are oppressed by Britain.

Given the East India Company's increasing control of Indian territory after the successful wars against Mysore, and, simultaneously, an increasing awareness of British cruelties in Bengal and the publication of translations of anti-Company works in France,[55] simple historical contingency did much to intensify anti-British sentiment. For example, the character of the English *savant* in Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's 1791 novel *La Chaumière indienne* was changed to a French traveller when the novel was adapted as an equestrian ballet in 1811; in the context of Napoleon's ongoing campaign against Britain, and the continental blockade against metropolitan France which exacerbated domestic hardships, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's character of an English doctor representing 'une compagnie de savants anglais, qui entreprit d'aller chercher, dans diverses parties du monde, des lumières sur toutes les sciences' (a company of English scholars, who undertook to go and find, in all parts of the world, knowledge of all the sciences)[56] would have been inappropriate and unpopular.[57] In Lucien Bonaparte's sentimental novel *La Tribu indienne, ou, Édouard et Stellina* (1799), however, the British, while the primary target of the author's attack on European expansionism, are not the only European power to be criticized.

A variation on the popular story of a European man who is saved by a young Indian woman, and who then sells her as a slave, the novel was praised on its publication for its *sensibilité* and its descriptions of nature.[58] The action takes place on an unspecified island in the 'Indies',[59] and the narrative depicts both Asian despotism, represented by the Bédas tribe to which Stellina belongs, and European rapaciousness. The dedication appended at the end of the novel firmly links it with Guillaume-Thomas Raynal's unease about the foundation of European colonies, and offers a damning indictment of European trade:

> La soif immodérée des richesses étouffe la nature, et l'or appelle tous les maux sur la terre qui la renferme.
>
> Heureux les pays sauvages inconnus aux nations policées de l'Europe, et qui ne possèdent rien qui puisse attirer ses avides spéculateurs!
>
> (The untempered desire for riches stifles nature, and gold inspires all the evils on the earth which bears it.
>
> Happy are the savage countries which are unknown to the civilized nations of Europe, and which contain nothing that can attract avid speculators!)[60]

Despite his condemnation of the 'civilized nations of Europe', not all Europeans are censured within the course of the narrative action. The French are absent from the narrative, and it is the English in particular who are criticized. Édouard is the only son of an English trader, 'riche négociant de Plymouth [qui] avait

acquis des biens immenses par le commerce des Indes: son avidité croissant à mesure, il ne vivait que pour les augmenter' (a rich trader from Plymouth [who] had acquired immense wealth through trade with the Indies: his avidity steadily growing, he lived only to augment it).[61] When he decides to sell Stellina as a slave despite the fact that she is carrying his child (an action which shocks even the Portuguese in Colombo), he is referred to as 'l'Anglais' (the Englishman), and this first use of the appellation stresses his difference:

> Telle est la reconnaissance de l'Anglais ... La fille d'itobar [*sic*], abattue par les remords et la fatigue, ne lui offre plus que des charmes flétris ... Elle ne peut plus lui procurer de trésors ... Les courtisanes qu'il espère bientôt posséder sont toutes plus belles que Stellina ... Milford ne la regarde plus comme une épouse, mais comme un esclave: il ne tourne pas même pas les yeux sur la pauvre sauvage qui sommeille près de lui!
>
> (Such was the gratitude of the Englishman ... The daughter of itobar, overwhelmed by remorse and fatigue, now offered him only faded charms ... She could not obtain treasures for him. The courtesans whom he was hoping to possess soon were all more beautiful than Stellina ... Milford no longer considered her as a wife, but as a slave: he did not even turn his eyes to the poor savage who was sleeping next to him!)[62]

On a symbolic level, Édouard's exploitation of Stellina functions as an allegory of European trade with, and domination of, the Indies. More specifically, the emphasis placed on Édouard's country of origin at this point stresses the corruption of the English in the Indies. The very absence of French traders tacitly distinguishes 'Frenchness' from Asiatic despotism, the rapacity of the Portuguese and the perfidy of the English.[63]

Tipu's Ambassadors at Versailles (1788)

The arrival of Tipu's three ambassadors in France in the summer of 1788 gave the court and the French public along the ambassadors' route (Toulon, Paris, Brest and L'Orient) the chance to encounter Indian customs and culture at first hand. Tipu's decision to send an embassy directly to Versailles in 1787 generated the diplomatic high point of the relationship between Mysore and France, which spanned the reigns of Hyder Ali and his son Tipu Sultan. The three ambassadors, Mahomet-Dervich-Khan, Akbar-Ali-Khan and Mahomet-Ousman-Khan, set sail from Pondichéry in July 1787 and arrived in Toulon a year later with three aims: Tipu wanted Louis XVI to sign an offensive and defensive alliance with the long-term goal of removing the British from India; the ambassadors were charged with the task of bringing back to India a range of craftsmen to work in Seringapatam (gardeners, glassblowers, weavers, watchmakers and, perhaps more significantly, 40 foundry workers, specializing in the manufacture of bombs, cannons and bullets);[64] finally, the ambassadors were to assess the possibility of sending one of Tipu's sons to be educated in France.[65] Amid

the economic turbulence of the late 1780s, Louis's ministers politely rejected all of Tipu's substantive requests; whereas Tipu wanted the *alliance française* to be bolstered by a permanent force of 3,000 French troops, to be based in Seringapatam and commanded by Tipu himself,[66] Louis XVI preferred to strengthen the Mysorean bond by sending 98 artisans,[67] a Sèvres porcelain service, and some plants, seeds and bulbs from the Jardin du roi.[68]

Louis XVI's unwillingness to sign a definitive alliance, coupled with the outbreak of the Revolution in 1789, resulted in Tipu's defeat by the forces of the East India Company in the Third Mysore War (1790–2). Regardless of the diplomatic failure of Tipu's embassy, however, the arrival of the ambassadors in France was a great cultural success and very popular. As the Minister for the Marine, César-Henri, comte de La Luzerne, complained to the ambassadors' interpreter, Ruffin: 'J'aime mieux aller les chercher que de les recevoir ici. Ils ne pouvaient faire un pas que ce ne soit la nouvelle publique' (I would rather go and meet them than receive them here. They cannot take one step outside without it being general gossip).[69] Indeed, it is the theatrical aspect of the ambassadors' visit to Paris and Versailles which has dominated historical accounts since, whether produced in the twenty-first century (that offered by Maya Jasanoff in her 2005 monograph, *Edge of Empire*)[70] or the nineteenth. As Joseph-François Michaud, writing in 1801, ruefully states:

> L'arrivé des trois Indiens à Paris fut un spectacle pour la capitale, ils occupèrent toutes les conservations, fixèrent tous les regards, et le nom de Tippoo-Saïb eut un moment de célébrité chez un peuple léger, qui était plus frappé de l'originalité des costumes asiatiques, que de l'importance de nos possessions dans l'Inde.
>
> (The arrival of the three Indians in Paris was a spectacle for the capital, they filled all the conversations, were the object of all attention, and the name of Tippoo-Saïb enjoyed a moment of celebrity amongst a superficial people, who were struck more by the originality of the Asian costumes than by the importance of our possessions in India.)[71]

A strong awareness of difference emerges from both the published accounts and the unpublished ones (principally, the bundle of letters between the Minister for the Marine, La Luzerne, and the ambassadors' translator, Ruffin, along with other miscellaneous documents conserved in the Archives nationales). La Luzerne, for example, was anxious that the translator make the ambassadors fully cognizant of court etiquette: 'Vous devés leur observer que la traduction de leur discours en français devrans être prononcé publiquement, il ne doit y être question d'aucune affaire' (You will have to point out to them that as the translation of their speech into French is going to be spoken publicly there must be no mention of state business).[72] In a further letter (22 August 1788), after it transpired that the ambassadors had wished to visit Versailles on the feast of St

Louis, La Luzerne posits the inappropriateness of their visit on a Christian and monarchical day of celebration, stressing their religion:

> le Roi n'est point dans l'usage de recevoir les ambassadeurs Musulmans si ce n'est en leur accordant une audience séparée, & s'ils vouloient voir la Cour, on les placeroit dans la galerie pour voir passer leurs Majestés, ce qui pourroit ne leur être pas agreeable.
>
> (the King is not in the habit of receiving Muslim ambassadors unless it is to grant them a private audience, & if they want to see the Court we will place them in the gallery in order that they can see their Majesties pass by, which surely must please them.)[73]

The only way that they could appear at court on the feast day was to be hidden away out of sight.

For all this, it does not follow that the alterity of the ambassadors was presented negatively. An anonymous account of their visit, published in 1788, stresses the anxiety shown by officials that religious differences be respected. On arrival at Toulon, the ambassadors were provided with food which was deemed to conform to their cultural requirements:

> Comme la nourriture des Asiatiques est essentiellement du riz, on avoit eu soin de s'en procurer à Toulon de plusieurs sortes; & attendu qu'il ne mangent de viandes que celles des animaux tués par eux-mêmes, on avoit également eu la précaution de s'approvisionner de moutons, de gibier, & de volailles de différentes espèces, tous vivans.
>
> (As Asians' food consists principally of rice, care had been taken to obtain several sorts of rice in Toulon; & considering that they ate only meat which came from animals that they had killed themselves, the precaution had equally been taken of providing live sheep, game & poultry of different species.)[74]

Initially, the exotic nature of the ambassadors' customs was accepted without adverse comment. On being introduced to the Commander in Toulon, for example, they presented him with a bowl of scented water in which to wash his hands:

> Dans ce moment, un Officier de leur maison, pourtant un vase en argent, rempli d'eau de senteur, vint le présenter à M. le Commandant pour s'en laver les mains, & ensuite à M. l'Ordonnateur; aussi-tôt après, on apporta sur un bassin un vase d'argent dans lequel étoient différens compartimens, avec plusieurs petites graines que l'on ne put connoître, de la cannelle & des parfums.
>
> (At this time, an Officer from their household, carrying a silver vase, filled with scented water, came and presented it to M. the Commander in order that he could wash his hands, & then the Officer presented it to the Master of Ceremonies; immediately after there was brought in on a bowl a silver vase divided into compartments containing several small unknown seeds, cinnamon & perfumes.)[75]

The Indians' difference was such that it defied the linguistic parameters of French. The cinnamon is named but the seeds are beyond French knowledge, so much so that they resisted translation.

In the ambassadors' public audience with the king on 13 August 1788, Indian etiquette was successfully combined with that of the court. The *Gazette de France* records that they 'ont présenté à Sa Majesté, sur des mouchoirs, 21 pièces d'or ce qui est, dans les usages de leurs pays, l'hommage du plus profond respect. Sa Majesté a accepté une des pièces de chacun d'eux' (presented to His Majesty, on handkerchiefs, 21 pieces of gold, which is, according to the customs of their country, a mark of the deepest respect. His Majesty accepted one piece from each of them).[76] The customs are reported neutrally, without judgement, and are presented as a source of valuable knowledge to the French observer.

The visit is, moreover, inscribed as an instance of cross-cultural contact. The newspaper reports, the *compte rendu* and the unpublished memoranda contained in the Archives nationales suggest that while French interest in the ambassadors was stimulated, the ambassadors themselves were curious about France. After their audience with the king on 13 August, the ambassadors were anxious to return to Versailles to view the palace, 'le parc, les petits appartements et tout ce qu'il y avoit de curieux' (the park, the small chambers and everything which was curious), a request that court officials were equally anxious not to grant.[77] At the time of the audience, they had asked the king for permission to view the 'salon d'Hercule' and 'de jouir un instant du spectacle brillant & majesteux' (to enjoy for a moment the brilliant & majestic spectacle).[78] Certainly, these French inscriptions display an uneven balance of power, in which the silent Indian is articulated by the French observer.[79] The anonymous *compte rendu*, however, describing the ambassadors in the provinces before their arrival in Paris, leaves the reader in little doubt of the difficulties involved in interpreting the Indians. In the description which the account offers of the visit to Toulon, on each occasion that a reaction of the ambassadors is noted, the verb 'paraître' (to appear) is used.[80] Although the account represents a silent Indian, the verb 'paraître' explicitly draws the reader's attention to the fact that a problematic negotiation is taking place, and to the undecipherable nature of otherness.[81]

Allusions to *curiosité* resonate through personal memoirs and accounts of the visit. Louise Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun, recalling the decision that she and Mme Michelle de Bonneuil took to accept the ambassadors' invitation to dine with them after her painting of Dervich-Khan's portrait, concedes that 'nous acceptâmes par pure curiosité' (we accepted out of simple curiosity).[82] Comte Félix de France d'Hézecques, a page at Louis XVI's court, similarly recollects public curiosity regarding the manner of preparing the ambassadors' spicy food, recording in his memoirs the crowds which turned up to watch the culinary activities: 'ce n'était point un des objets les moins intéressants pour la curiosité publique que

d'aller voir, dans les souterrains de Trianon, la préparation de leurs repas' (for the curiosity of the people, it was not one of most uninteresting activities to go and watch the preparation of their food in the underground rooms of the Trianon).[83] Ruffin also notes the public clamour to see the ambassadors on their journey to Brest before setting sail for India. Arriving in Étampes, he remarks, 'nous trouvames toute la ville sur pied' (we found the whole town out and about),[84] while at Quimper 'les Écoliers ont étourdi les Ambassadeurs de vivat[s]' (the Schoolboys' cheers left the Ambassadors dazed).[85] Yet, while Hallier views French curiosity about the Indian ambassadors as evidence of respect for 'des mœurs exotiques' (exotic mores),[86] it is possible to see in such 'positive' curiosity the persistence of more negative essentializing stereotypes.

In his *Collectionneurs, amateurs et curieux. Paris, Venise: XVI^{e}–XVIII^{e} siècle* (1987), Krzysztof Pomian carries out an extensive examination of the meanings of the word *curieux* in the eighteenth century. After discussing both Furetière's definition and that offered by the Académie, he concludes that curiosity is a desire to possess 'des choses rares, nouvelles, secrètes ou singulières ... [le] désir de la totalité' (rare, new, secret or singular things ... [the] desire for everything).[87] Even if curiosity can be positive, as the dictionary published by the Académie implies,[88] it also has negative connotations, associated with the desire for possession and occupation.[89] The frequency of references to the curiosity inspired by the ambassadors is indicative of a wider cultural phenomenon: that of desiring and owning exotica. The resonance of references to the 'spectacle' of the ambassadors challenges the notion of a genuine desire for knowledge and posits them as exotic objects to be viewed by Europeans. In addition to Ruffin's references to the crowds turning out to see the Indian ambassadors, the notion of the Indians as 'exhibits' is particularly evident in the Danish traveller Gerhard Anton von Halem's account of his visit to Paris. Present at Versailles in 1788, von Halem, discussing le Petit-Trianon and le Grand-Trianon at Versailles, explicitly associates the Indians with the zoo: 'Les Indiens m'amènent à parler de la ménagerie' (Talking about the Indians brings me on to the menagerie).[90]

Commodification and fetishization of the 'Indian other' was apparent in a range of cultural phenomena. Images of all three ambassadors became highly fashionable, appearing on Sèvres coffee cups, ladies' fans and ornamental coat buttons.[91] Appropriation of the Indian ambassadors also occurred in textual representations. They were, for example, used in anonymous pamphlets by *philosophes* as readily identifiable mouthpieces in debates about despotism.[92] The use of the 'oriental other' as a vehicle for satire or as a thinly disguised means of expressing a political point (the most famous and often-quoted example being Diderot's *Les Bijoux indiscrets* (1748))[93] is a received idea in both literary and historical analyses.[94] These philosophical tracts appear different from earlier satires in that the named Indian ambassador does not function as a fictional 'sign' to

be read in a *roman à clef* but is instead grounded in a reality external to the text itself. He is, nevertheless, ventriloquized and possessed according to a French agenda, a strategy which allows for a satirical attack on both Indian despotism and the French (Christian) culture from which the writer normally speaks.

Such ventriloquism and occupation is particularly notable in Louis-Antoine de Caraccioli's novel of 1789, *Lettres d'un Indien à Paris à son ami Glazir*. This work belongs to a recognizable literary genre: that of non-European travellers coming to Europe and commenting on society.[95] Like the philosophical tracts, it uses the ambassadorial visit to create a sense of authenticity. Ostensibly a narrative of a fictional Mysorean's visit to France, the novel presents the itinerary of the hero, Zator, whose travels follow those of the ambassadors. Frequent references to actual events, with descriptions stylistically echoing official accounts of the visit, ground the text in an external, recognizable reality.[96] Nonetheless, Indians on French soil provide little more than a framework for the main goal of the text, a satirical assessment of French society, as indicated in Caraccioli's subtitle: 'les mœurs françaises and les bizarreries du temps' (French mores and the strangeness of the times).

In the letters written between La Luzerne and Ruffin before the ambassadors' audience at Versailles, there emerges the strong impression of an established trope, Indian opulence, being contested by the reality of the encounter. In a letter dated 4 August 1788, La Luzerne advised that the gifts which the ambassadors had brought for the king should not be officially presented, as they did not conform to the image of wealthy Indian princes:

> J'ai vu depuis S[a] M[ajesté]. Elle desireroit que les présents des ambassadeurs ne fussent point portés à l'audience publique, mais envoyés dans les cabines. Faites leur savoir que tel est l'usage. Vous concevés d'ailleurs qu'après les éxagérations des journaux, la modicité de ces dons jetteroit un ridicule sur l'ambassade que les gazettes étrangères et spécialement les papiers anglais se permettroient mille plaisanteries. Tachés de gagner ce point et instruisés moi quand vous aurés réussi.
>
> (I have since seen His Majesty. He wishes that the ambassadors' presents on no account be brought to the public audience, but sent instead to the antechambers. Make it known to them that such is the custom. You can no doubt see that after the exaggerations which appeared in the newspapers, the modest nature of these gifts will make the embassy look ridiculous, which will allow the foreign gazettes, and particularly the English papers, to indulge in a thousand jokes. Try to convince them of this and inform me as soon as you have succeeded.)[97]

And he repeated this request on 11 August 1788:

> Vous saurez, M., pourquoi l'on désire que les présents soient portés sans pompe. Leur modicité & ce que les papiers publics en ont annoncé feraoient en France & chez nos voisins un contraste ridicule.

> (You will be aware, M[onsieur], why it is desired that the presents be brought without pomp and ceremony. The difference between their modest nature, and what the papers have publicized about them, would create, both in France and in our neighbouring countries, a ridiculous contrast.)[98]

Misgivings about the presence of the ambassadors also emerged from Ruffin's correspondence. Although he was anxious that the foreigners' dress codes be respected, he asked that the minister carry out a thorough inspection of the Indians' clothes before the ambassadors were presented to the king:

> Permettez moi, Monseigneur, d'avoir l'honneur de vous observer qu'il seroit nécessaire d'inspecter un peu leurs vêtements avant votre audience. Toute la Capitale voudra voir cette cérémonie. Nous devons respecter le costume de ces étrangers; mais pour que le Public ait pour lui le même respect, il faut au moins qu'il soit propre, et s'il est possible, qu'il ait un air d'opulence. Je ne peux point me persuader que les amb[rs]. n'ayant point un habillement plus décent et plus riche que celui que je leur vois.
>
> (Allow me, my Lord, to have the honour of observing to you that it will be necessary to inspect their clothes a little before the audience. All the capital wishes to see this ceremony. We must respect the costumes of these foreigners; but in order that the Public can still have the same respect for them, they must at the very least be clean, and, if possible, give the impression of opulence. I am not at all convinced that the ambassadors have any clothing more rich or more decent than that in which I see them.)[99]

Ruffin's letter reveals concerns about court etiquette and about the wider public perception of difference. The stress laid by both Ruffin and La Luzerne on the lack of lavishness evident in the ambassadors' attire and the gifts which they intended to offer to the king also provides evidence of the gap between perceptions and the reality of India. From the publication of the first travellers' accounts of the Mogul Court, India had become synonymous with wealth and great riches.[100] In court society, where image was paramount, it was imperative to retain the illusion of magnificence, particularly when France's rival in India, Britain, was keenly following events at Versailles.

In other respects, the established, essentialized image of India was reinforced. The Indian ambassadors were vacillating, excitable and impatient, and the translator appeared to have prior knowledge of such a 'type'. Ruffin reported to the minister that he had decided to postpone relaying a parcel of letters from the minister to the ambassadors until he had completed his translation of the letters: 'Je connais l'impatience indienne. Il ne faut l'exciter qu'après s'être mis en état de la satisfaire' (I know Indian impatience. One must excite it only after placing oneself in a position to satisfy it).[101] Three days later, he asserted that Ousman had no sense of practicalities: 'comme tous les Orientaux, qui sont habitués à voir toutes les formes & tous les principes plus à la volonté de leur despote' (like all Orientals, who are in the habit of seeing everything according to the ways &

principles which appeal to the whims of their despot),[102] a comparison which relies on another axiomatic feature of oriental societies: despotism. Moreover, in a three-page letter of 23 August, Ruffin described the 'desordres intérieurs' (moral laxity) of the ambassadors. Ambassador Ousman

> est indigné de voir Dervich livré aux femmes; mais il ne se posséde pas de colère lorsqu'il raconte comme un fait, qu'il a vérifié, que le 2nd ambassadeur, presque octogénaire vit avec la fille du Suisse de l'hôtel, passe les nuits avec elle et permet qu'elle voye pend^{t}. le jour son fils Ayanays [*sic*], m'at'il dit en particulier, la véritable raison du peu d'empressemen^{t}. actuel d'Akbar Aly [*sic*] à retourner dans l'Inde.
>
> (is indignant to see Dervich giving himself over to women; he could not control his anger when he related, as a fact which he had verified, that the second ambassador, practically an octogenarian, is living with the daughter of the house, spends the nights with her and allows her to see his son, Ayanays, during the day. This, in particular, he told me, is the real reason for the lack of enthusiasm which Akbar Aly currently shows for returning to India.)[103]

On the ambassadors' return journey to Brest, Ruffin adds:

> Dervich Khan est attaqué de la maladie contraire. Il emporte le souvenir le plus cuisant des plaisirs, auxquels il s'est livré sans goût et sans choix à Paris. Il est enflé et son embonpoint trop subite ne trompe plus personne. Il ne peut plus ni rester en place, ni souffrir longtems le mouvem^{t}. de la voiture; & M. de la Seyre a toutes les peines du monde à le persuader de se remettre en route.
>
> (Dervich Khan has been struck down with a perverse sickness. He carries away the most burning memory of the pleasures which he indulged in without taste or discernment in Paris. He is swollen, and his all-too-sudden weight increase does not deceive anybody. He can no longer bear to stay in one place, neither can he suffer the movement of the carriage for a long period of time; & M. de la Seyre has all the difficulty in the world persuading him to start the journey again.)[104]

Not only had Mahomet-Dervich-Khan made the most of the 'pleasures' on offer in Paris, making him unhappy and unwilling to leave;[105] the euphemistic description implies that he was suffering from gonorrhea, which causes considerable swelling in the joints. As inscribed by Ruffin, the ambassadors were given to licentious behaviour, freely passing the daughter of the *suisse* guard between father and son, and thus conformed to the image of the Indian as lascivious, with the *topos* of India as a site uncontrolled sexuality.[106] The *compte rendu*, too, emphasizes the lasciviousness of the Indian ambassadors, reporting that, at an official ball in Toulon on 16 July, they were captivated by French women: 'ils louèrent beaucoup le caractère aimable des dames Françoises' (they greatly praised the amiable character of the French ladies).[107]

If such an observation appears extraneous to the narrative, it is worth noting that the *compte rendu* is digressive throughout and the description of the ambassadors' visit to France appears only in the third and final section of the work.

The first attempts an overview of all current knowledge on India; the second section is a brief history of the rule of Tipu Sultan and his father, Hyder Ali. The first section relies heavily on the writings of Voltaire, particularly his *Fragments sur quelques révolutions dans l'Inde, sur la mort du comte de Lally, et sur plusieurs autres sujets* of 1773,[108] and, as is made clear by the 'Avertissement' preceding the text, the work criticizes European corruption in India:

> Il serait singulier & désirable en même temps que, lasse de donner l'exemple des vices & de la corruption, en horreur aux Indous, l'Europe parvînt un jour à polir & à civiliser cet Indostan qu'elle a presque dénaturé à force d'orgueil & d'avarice.
>
> (It would be both surprising & desirable at the same time, if, tired of giving an example of vices & corruption, which horrify the Hindoos, Europe managed one day to tame & civilize Hindustan which she has practically denatured as a result of her pride and avarice.)[109]

The 'Avertissement' acknowledges the cruelties which European colonization has brought to the inhabitants of India, but does not question the superiority of European civilization. This belief underpins all three sections. Espousing the notion of trade as a means of uniting nations, a notion most famously expounded in the introduction to Raynal's *Histoire des deux Indes*,[110] the account juxtaposes universalizing rhetoric with essentializing representations of Indians, stressing their backwardness: 'Les Indiens n'ont nulle idée de l'artillerie, & ont une très grande prédilection pour la leur, dans laquelle ils font d'une gaucherie insupportable' (Indians have no idea of artillery, & have a marked preference for their own [form of weaponry], which they make use of with an insupportable clumsiness).[111] The second section, which makes extensive, unreferenced use of Le Maistre de la Tour's *Histoire d'Ayder-Ali-Khan, ou Nouveaux mémoires sur l'Inde, enrichis de notes historiques* (1783), continues with these stereotypes, adding that of the sexually available *bayadères* at the court of Hyder Ali.[112] In such a context, the reference to the ambassadors' attraction to French women resonates with a more general belief in Indian voluptuousness.

The numerous accounts stimulated by the arrival of Tipu's ambassadors show in microcosm the prevalence of recurring techniques for representing India. Despite the official exhortations to respect the cultural and religious *mœurs* of the Indian visitors, the techniques used to inscribe the three ambassadors belied such good intentions.[113] Contact with the other did not necessarily promote an increase in understanding; meeting real Indians did not fundamentally alter textual strategies of representation. It is evident that, from the closing years of the *ancien régime* to the end of the Napoleonic Wars, persistent tropes continued to underpin the French image of India: exoticism, lasciviousness, extravagance and the presence of other European powers.

3 EMASCULATING INDIA: THE *INDIENNE*, FEMINIZATION AND FEMALE WRITERS

Since the publication of Edward W. Said's *Orientalism* (1978), the self-reflexivity of representations has become axiomatic in works on the European colonial encounter with other cultures. Examining inter-cultural perceptions at the moment of the British encounter with the subcontinent, Ainslee T. Embree, for example, emphasizes the historical contingency essential to every meeting, arguing that 'each new generation of every society, in coming to terms with other cultures, encounters afresh its own past and its own identity'.[1] As Pagden asserts, however, 'the "other" has always had to be equipped with a dense and particular cultural identity'.[2]

As numerous critics have demonstrated, an important characteristic of Indian cultural identity, according to early-modern European perceptions, was femininity; as Rajan comments, 'Perceiving India as feminine is a familiar practice of the literary imagination'.[3] The portrayal of India as feminine is not only a matter of unequal power relations, with learned Westerners surveying and then articulating the East;[4] it is also concerned with the prevalence of female stereotypes in writings on India, notably the figures of the *bayadère* (temple dancer) and the *sati* (the Indian widow who carries out self-immolation on the funeral pyre of her husband). In recent years, these female stereotypes have generated great critical interest, not least because of the role accorded to the *sati* by Spivak in postcolonial debates.[5]

Given the wealth of critical material on the perceived femininity of India in eighteenth-century writing, it might appear doubtful whether any further insight can be added. Yet, while this technique of representation may be all too obvious, it does not necessarily follow that it was used in a consistent or a homogeneous way. By charting its use across a range of French-language texts (both factual and fictional) produced during this formative period in the European colonization of India, this chapter will examine the persistence of the strategy and its malleability – a malleability which was not governed by historical contingency alone. The chapter will begin by examining how Indian female characters and the rhetoric of feminization were used in eighteenth-century French writings on India.

Moving systematically from overtly factual texts (travelogues, histories and dictionaries) to the fictional (plays, *contes* and novels), it will explore the linguistic markers that created India for the eighteenth-century reader. Inevitably such an approach will privilege a Eurocentric perspective; the aim, however, is neither to perpetuate what Said has dubbed the 'Orientalist' gaze, nor to rehabilitate the previously silent observed Indian, but to explore the *histoire des mentalités françaises* by genealogically analysing the French image of India and considering how individuals used language and tropology to shape a new discourse.[6] This crossing of generic divides will reveal the blurring of the factual with the fictional, the use of fictional techniques by ostensibly factual writers, and the use of geographic facts by fictional writers.

Stressing the historical contingency of representations, the chapter will move on to look at how female Indians were constructed in contemporary debates on morals and femininity. The final section, examining how female writers dealt with Indian alterity, contests the notion of a homogeneous French identity and reveals the complexity of reactions stimulated by contact with Indian cultures.

Feminization and Female Stereotypes

Cultural historians have recently argued that nineteenth-century texts presented a monolithic image of the Indian as weak and feminine.[7] In contrast, the feminization of 'the other' and the employment of female stereotypes in eighteenth-century French representations were more mutable tropologies, which were adapted and manipulated according to historical contingencies. After the 1789 Revolution, under the successive regimes which sought to distinguish the new 'virile' France from its European rivals, the former regime and colonized Indians alike, the use of gendered discourse was explicit. For example, in the introduction to his translated collection of *Fables et contes indiens* (1790), Louis-Mathieu Langlès warns his prospective reader:

> Il ne faut pas s'attendre à trouver dans ces ouvrages ingénieux, cette mâle énergie, ce noble esprit d'indépendance et de liberté qui caractérisent la plupart de ceux que notre heureuse révolution a fait éclore; cependant ils n'en sont pas moins précieux pour les hommes accoutumés à étudier, à comparer les mœurs, les loix des nations.
>
> (You must not expect to find in these ingenious works, that male energy, that noble spirit of independence and liberty which is characteristic of the majority of people whom our happy revolution has awoken; nevertheless, they are not any the less precious for men accustomed to studying, to comparing the mores and the laws of nations.)[8]

The association of the revolutionary spirit of freedom and independence with masculine virtues leaves little doubt that the Hindu is France's feminine antithesis. Curiously, however, in Antoine Fantin-Desodoards's introduction to his

translation of Tipu Sultan's memoirs, the strategy of feminization is employed against Louis XVI's courtiers. Tipu Sultan's ambassadors are described as offering an oriental spectacle to the 'courtisans efféminés de Louis XVI' (Louis XVI's effeminate courtiers).[9] While the fashioning of the Revolution as a male discourse makes this jibe at the *ancien régime* unsurprising, the inversion of the traditional technique of feminizing the Indian is significant.[10]

Although the technique of feminization was malleable, the prominence of Indian women in depictions of India was consistent. In both fictional and factual accounts, representations of *bayadères* and the *sati* contributed to the received idea of *les grandes Indes* as a site of sexual availability.[11] As Ravi and Assayag have demonstrated, travellers to India, from Marco Polo in the thirteenth century onwards, displayed a fascination with the Hindu tradition of *Devadasis*: women attached to a temple, serving a divinity but also trained in the arts of dance and music.[12] When the libretto of his opera *Les Bayadères* was published in 1821, Victor-Joseph-Étienne de Jouy, exploiting his credentials as an Orientalist following his election to the Académie française in 1814, explained, in the *notice historique* which prefaced the text, the origins of these temple dancers:

> A ce nom indien de *Devadansis*, *Devavialès*, les Français ont substitué celui de Bayadères, par corruption du mot *Belladeiras* (danseuses), que les Portugais employèrent pour désigner cette classe nombreuse de jeunes filles consacrées tout-à-la-fois au culte des dieux et de la volupté.
>
> (For this Indian name of *Devadansis*, *Devalialès*, the French substituted *Bayadères*, a corruption of the word *Belladeiras* (dancers), that the Portuguese used to distinguish this numerous class of young girls dedicated to the worship of the gods, and at the same time, the worship of voluptuousness.)[13]

While explaining the etymology of the word *bayadère*, Jouy stresses the appeal of the Indian dancers to the European who encounters them (either physically or in the imagination): their embodiment of devotion, religion and sexuality. Indeed, their bewitching power was such that the inclusion of a description of the *bayadères* became almost obligatory in travelogues discussing India.[14]

Pierre Poivre, who travelled in India between 1745 and 1747, calls these dancing women 'baladines'; describing their involvement in religious worship as well as their licentious behaviour, he negotiates the problem of cultural difference by relating them to what he views as their European equivalent, 'filles publiques' (prostitutes).[15] Although emphasizing their role in devotional duties, his description serves to inscribe Indian religion and Indian women within a European, Christian ethnocentrism: 'Ce sont celles qui font les prieres publiques dans la pagode en chantant les louanges de dieu, qu'elles regalent toujours de quelleques danses' (They are the women who carry out public prayers in the pagoda while singing praises to God, whom they always entertain with some

dances).[16] Poivre offers the opinion that the only reason idol worship continues in India is the presence of such beautiful women in the temple:

> Je crois que sans elles la dévotion aux idoles ne se soutiendroit pas longtemps et qu'elles contribuent beaucoup a attirer la multitude. Il est certain que presque tous ceux qui vont au temple ne vont que pour le plaisir d'y voir et d'entendre ces jeunes filles qui ont ordinairement la voix belle et dansent fort bien; d'autant plus que toutes leur paroles, gestes et actions tendent a inspirer la volupté; *elles en font profession* [italics added].
>
> (I believe that without them, devotion to idols would not survive for long and that they count for a lot in the attraction of crowds. It is certain that all those who go to the temple go only for the pleasure of seeing and hearing there these young girls who normally have a beautiful voice and dance very well; so much so that their words, gestures and actions tend to inspire voluptuousness; *they make it their profession*.)[17]

The perceived corruption of Hinduism is stressed by describing the *bayadères* as the Brahmins' victims ('Les Brames sont donc chargés de l'education de ces jeunes victimes' (The Brahmins are thus charged with the education of these young victims)),[18] language which implicitly posits the European civilized male as the *Indienne*'s potential saviour.[19]

Anquetil Duperron's report of his encounter with the *bayadères* in Surat employs similar language to titillate the reader. Poivre claims that the *bayadères* adjust their dress so that they 'paroissent comme nües et sont vus seduisantes que si elles l'etoient reelement' (appear naked and are seen to be as seductive as they really are);[20] Anquetil Duperron maintains that if the spectator has enough money nudity is guaranteed: 'Lorsque les spectateurs sont généreux et peu scrupuleux, les domestiques se retirent et les danseuses paroissent toutes nues' (When the spectators are generous and without scruples, the servants retire and the dancers appear completely naked).[21] The devotional role of the *bayadères* is omitted from Anquetil Duperron's description; the reader is invited to delight in erotic fantasies about the dance, an act of imagination which is solicited by the use of the modal verb 'pouvoir' (to be able): 'Ce qu'on peut imaginer de plus lascif dans les postures et dans les gestes, accompagne alors leurs danses' (What one can imagine as the greatest lasciviousness in their postures and their gestures accompanies their dances).[22]

As James Duncan and Derek Gregory have pointed out, the process of travel writing, in representing other cultures, involves writers translating one place into another and constantly being confronted by the inadequacies of their own language.[23] Linguistic shortcomings were not the only challenge to authorial autonomy. In 1978, Charles Batten identified the role of literary and cultural convention in determining the content of travelogues.[24] Given generic constraints and readers' expectations, a *bayadère* episode had become mandatory in travel accounts by the end of the eighteenth century. More significantly, the

appearance of the *bayadère* in genres other than travel writing shows the importance of this female figure as a marker of India and the exotic.

Raynal's *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissemens et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes* (1770) contains a detailed portrayal of the *bayadères* in the trading post of Surat.[25] Although they are introduced in an article seeking to establish how 'seminaires de volupté' (seminaries of voluptuousness) came into existence, the account climaxes with a fantastical representation of the dance of the *bayadères*. The dancers marry artifice with natural grace: 'Tout conspire au prodigieux succès de ces femmes voluptueuses, l'art & la richesse de leur parure, l'adresse qu'elles ont à façonner leur beauté' (Everything conspires together to create the prodigious success which is these voluptuous women, the art & richness of their raiment, the skill which they have used to shape their beauty).[26] The focus of the Western gaze is then objectified, the *bayadère* considered as separate body parts: 'Leurs longs cheveux noirs' (Their long black hair), 'leur sein' (their breasts), 'leurs yeux' (their eyes). As in travellers' accounts by Poivre and Anquetil Duperron, nudity is hinted at by the veil 'qui couvre le sein, n'en cache point les palpitations, les soupirs, les molles ondulations [ce voile] n'ôte rien à la volupté' (which covers their breasts, but does not cover at all their palpitations, their sighs, their soft undulations [this veil] does not diminish in any way their voluptuousness).[27]

Raynal's is not the only historical account to include a portrayal of the *bayadères*. In Le Maistre de la Tour's history of Hyder Ali, the author cites Raynal as justification for their inclusion. Despite his assertion of eyewitness authenticity, it is a textually-derived India which dominates his description: 'On ne peut parler des spectacles, des chants & des danses sans parler des Bayadères dont l'Abbé Raynal a fait un portrait si avantageux dans son histoire philosophique' (The spectacle, songs & dances cannot be spoken of without speaking of the *Bayadères* of which the Abbé Raynal has drawn such an advantageous portrait in his philosophical history).[28] Le Maistre de la Tour's description of the *bayadères*, which is cited by critics such as Ravi and Deleury, is significant not only because it neglects the devotional duties of the *bayadères* in order to present them exclusively as court dancers (as Ravi claims), but also because of its influence on subsequent writers.[29] Le Maistre de la Tour's analysis centres on three key ideas: the *bayadères* as court dancers, the exceptional nature of their physical bodies and their youth:

> Les danseuses sont supérieures ... aux comédiennes & aux chanteuses, & l'on peut dire qu'elles feroient plaisir sur le théâtre de l'Opéra de Paris: tout danse & tout joue en même tems chez ces femmes; leurs têtes, leurs yeux, leurs bras, leurs pieds & tout leur corps ne semblent se mouvoir que pour enchanter; elles sont très-légères & ont une très-fort jarret; elles pirouettent sur un pied, & s'élèvent dans un autre instant avec une force surprenante; elles ont tant de justesse dans leurs pas & dans leurs mouve-

mens, qu'elles accompagnent les instrumens avec des grelots qu'elles ont à leurs pieds, & comme elles sont de la taille la plus svelte & la plus élégante, tous leurs mouvemens se sont avec grace.

(The dancers are superior … to the female actors & singers, & it could be said that they would appear delightful on stage at the Opéra in Paris: with these women all the singing & all the dancing takes place at the same time; their heads, their eyes, their arms, their feet, & their whole bodies seem to move only to bewitch [the spectator]; they are very light & they have strong legs; they pirouette on one foot & then jump in the next instance with a surprising force; they have such a good sense of timing with their steps & movements that they accompany the musical instruments with small bells which they wear around their feet, & as their bodies are the most svelte & most elegant, all their movements take place with grace.)[30]

The combination of terms which reveal the spectator's admiration ('enchanter' (to bewitch) and 'force surprenante' (surprising force)) with his use of superlatives ('la plus svelte' (the most svelte) and 'la plus élégante' (the most elegant)) stresses the erotic fascination that the dancers provide, and, indeed, a certain exotic unease. While they might appear delightful on stage at the Opéra in Paris, they seem to have some supernatural hold over the viewer. Given that Le Maistre de la Tour had spent some time at Hyder Ali's court, this personal description is understandable. The appearance of the same description, unsourced, in the anonymous account of the visit by Tipu Sultan's three ambassadors to Versailles in 1788 is, however, more curious:

Ces Bayadères sont des Danseuses supérieures dans leur genre; elles ne dépareroient pas l'Opéra de Paris: tout danse & tout joue en même temps chez elles; leurs têtes, leurs yeux, leurs bras, leurs pieds, tout leur corps semblent ne se mouvoir que pour enchanter; elles sont d'une incroyable légèreté, & ont le jarret aussi fort que souple: leur taille est des plus sveltes & des plus élégantes, & elles n'ont pas un mouvement qui ne soit pas une grace.

(These *Bayadères* are the best dancers of their kind; & they would not be out of place in the Paris Opéra: with these women, all the dancing & all the singing takes place at the same time: their heads, their eyes, their arms, their feet, their whole bodies, seem to move only to bewitch [the spectator], they are incredibly light & have legs as strong as they are supple; their bodies are the most svelte & the most elegant; they do not make one movement which is not graceful.)[31]

Le Maistre de la Tour's personal evocation of the court dancers in Hyder Ali's court has been applied to his son's dancers with only superficial verb and noun changes.[32] More intriguing still is Michaud's portrayal of the *bayadères* in his *Histoire des progrès et de la chute de l'empire de Mysore sous les règnes d'Hyder-Aly et Tippoo-Saïb* (1801):

Ces bayadères sont des danseuses supérieures dans leur genre; tout danse et tout joue en même temps chez-elles: leur tête, leurs yeux, leurs bras, leurs pieds, tout leur corps,

> semble ne se mouvoir que pour enchanter, elles sont d'incroyable légèreté, et ont le jarret aussi fort que souple: leur taille est des plus sveltes et des plus élégantes; et elles n'ont pas un mouvement qui ne soit une grâce.
>
> (These *bayadères* are the best dancers of their kind; with these women, all the dancing and all the singing takes place at the same time: their heads, their eyes, their arms, their feet, their whole bodies, seem to move only to bewitch [the spectator], they are incredibly light and have legs as strong as they are supple; their bodies are the most svelte and the most elegant; they do not make one movement which is not graceful.)[33]

While the rest of Michaud's history is written using past tenses (either the *passé simple* or the imperfect, according to the actions and events being narrated), the description of the *bayadères* suddenly switches to the present tense. Although portraying Tipu Sultan's *bayadères* specifically (as shown by the designator 'Ces'), the shift in tense universalizes the dancers: all Indian dancers have such remarkable physical attributes, transcending historical specificity. Even in the genre of historical writing, which lays claim to authenticity, the *bayadères* function as a marker of India, a French textual construction which is self-referential and self-perpetuating.

Indian Women: Paragons of Virtue

Whereas the Indian woman frequently epitomized the alterity and sexual availability of the Orient in French imaginations, the *Indienne*, both Muslim and Hindu, could also be a figure of great anxiety. Kate Teltscher, analysing representations of Indian women in the seventeenth century, explores this apprehension by delineating the tropes of the *querelle des femmes*: feminine virtue and vice, wifely submissiveness and sexual 'depravity'.[34] The discursive techniques identified by Teltscher persisted throughout the eighteenth century, but the representations of Indian women that they propagated were, in addition, historically and geopolitically contingent.

Caraccioli's *Lettres d'un Indien à Paris* (1789) contains such a representation. A topical novel, which exploited the public curiosity generated by the visit of Tipu Sultan's ambassadors to Versailles in the summer of 1788, it belongs to that distinctive eighteenth-century subgenre of fictionalized Orientals who travel to Europe and comment on British or French society.[35] As in other fictional travelogues, the *Indienne* is used by Caraccioli as a point of reference against which French women are contrasted. Thus the Indian Zator compares the frivolity of French women with the sequestered Muslim *Indienne*, observing that 'Nos femmes toujours renfermées ne prêtent point à la plaisanterie' (Our women, always locked away, do not indulge in pleasantries).[36] The physical prominence of women in French society again strikes Zator when he arrives in Paris. In an ironic reversal of the moment of arrival in travelogues written by Frenchmen

travelling to the East, Zator expresses his confusion regarding Parisian society by representing it in contradistinction with India. The description consequently relies on binary oppositions:

> Il est impossible de se figurer l'étonnement et l'embarras d'un Indien au milieu de Paris … Ce sont des femmes répandues de toute parts, tandis que les nôtres vivent toujours renfermées; des édifices d'une hauteur extraordinaire, pendant que nos cafés n'ont qu'un rez-de-chaussée; des chevaux courent à perte d'haleine, tandis que nos dromadaires & nos chameaux ne marchent qu'avec une lenteur incroyable; des gens de toute espèce habillés de toutes couleurs, pendant que nous n'avons constamment qu'un seul habit monotone.
>
> (It is impossible to describe the surprise and confusion felt by an Indian in the middle of Paris … Women appear everywhere, whereas ours always live shut away; the buildings are extremely tall, while our cafés have only a ground floor; the horses run at a breathless pace, while our dromedaries & camels walk at an incredibly slow speed; all types of people wear a whole range of colours, while ours constantly have only the same monotonous costume.)[37]

The imagined presence of the *Indienne* (undefined as either Muslim or Hindu) in the infrequent letters from Zator's wives is more than a simple device for creating exotic colour. It spotlights one of the perceived faults with French society prior to the Revolution: the power which women were believed to exert over society and the court.[38] Caraccioli satirizes female conversation using a double ventriloquism: Zator, the Indian male ventriloquized by a French writer, in turn speaks for a French *petite-maîtresse*. A series of non-sequiturs reveals the superficiality of female French conceptions of sequestered Indian women, the *petite-maîtresse* concluding: 'Votre religion n'est pas amusante pour les femmes. On dit que vous les renfermez' (Your religion is not much fun for women. It is said that you shut them away).[39] Throughout the text, the Indian woman is presented not as an object of pity, but as an exemplar of feminine virtue; it is, on the contrary, French *men* who deserve the reader's sympathy. For example, while staying in Paris, Zator receives a visitor:

> Un inconnu se présenta il y a quelque tems chez moi, s'annonca comme ayant quelque chose de très important à me communiquer, & finit par demander des instructions relatives à la manière dont nous morigénons les femmes lorsqu'elles sont mutines et rétives.
>
> (Some time ago, an unknown man presented himself at my house, announcing himself by saying that he had something very important to communicate to me, & finishing by asking for some instructions on the manner in which we tamed our ladies when they had become malicious and rebellious.)[40]

It would appear that there is only one way to tame rebellious femininity: a sojourn in India. As Zator claims, 'nos usages vous rendraient maître absolu de ses démarches & de ses volontés' (our customs would render you absolute master

of all your affairs and wishes).[41] Here, the textual *Indienne* is polyvalent: a site of male anxiety, but also, when physically imprisoned, a source of redress for emasculated Frenchmen. And it is, indeed, specifically French masculinity which is perceived to be under threat. After some time spent in France, Zator makes a brief trip to London. Once more it is the condition of women that stimulates one of his first observations about society. He remarks:

> Les femmes y [à Londres] sont aussi soumises, qu'elles sont dominantes à Paris. Les maris les tiennent dans une espèce d'esclavage ... Il est étonnant comme cent lieues de distance changent les mœurs. Paris & Londres se touchent, & ce sont deux mondes absolument différents.
>
> (The women there [in London] are as subjugated as they are dominant in Paris. The husbands keep them in a sort of slavery ... It is surprising how one hundred leagues in distance can change mores. Paris & London are next to each other, & they are two absolutely different worlds.)[42]

Although English women are not as dominant as are women in Paris, their 'enslavement' is not perceived as an advantage. In Caraccioli's fictional representation, alterity is differentiated in terms of both gender and nationality; while the condition of women in Europe is contrasted with that of the *Indienne*, European womanhood itself is not homogeneous.

Real travellers, as well as imaginary ones, adduced the *Indienne* in contemporaneous debates. Le Gentil's *Voyage dans les mers de l'Inde* (1780), like Caraccioli's fictional narrative, suggests that Indian women were exemplars of feminine virtue. His depiction of women is, however, differentiated in terms of religion and social order. Hindus from the upper orders are renowned for their fidelity, while Muslim women require imprisonment to preserve their chastity:

> Les femmes des Indiens passent aussi dans le pays pour être de la plus grande fidélité à leurs maris. Si quelques-unes manquent à ce devoir sacré, il faut les aller chercher dans la plus basse extraction; car parmi les femmes des principaux gentils, l'adultere est un cas des plus rares. Les femmes des mahométans n'ont pas la même réputation, il leur faut des verrouils, des jalousies, des surveillans continuels.
>
> (The wives of Indians appear also in this country to show the greatest fidelity towards their husbands. If there are some who fail in this sacred duty, they would have to be found amongst those of the lowest extraction; because amongst the wives of the principal noblemen, adultery is very rare. Mahometan women do not have the same reputation, and they need locks, jealous guarding and continuous surveillance.)[43]

If the sequestered Muslim woman was a polyvalent signifier who could be deployed as an exemplar of both virtue and perfidy, the figure of the *sati* was even more troubling. In recent years, an enormous amount of critical attention has been paid to the figure of the *sati* and the techniques of representation used by Western observers to describe the act of self-immolation.[44] Indeed, as Banerjee

remarks, the 'almost mandatory inclusion' of the *sati* in early modern European travelogues 'suggests that the rite was inseparable from European imaginings of India'.[45] In a handwritten note that Anquetil Duperron appended to his own copy of his travel writings (published in 1771) he observes, after his description of a woman throwing herself upon her husband's burning body – an event which he had not personally witnessed – that:

> J'ai ajouté ce trait pour me délivrer des mille et une questions que l'on me faisoit sur les usages du pays; en cela, j'ai manqué à la vérité. Le voyageur de retour a tout vu, assure tout de peur d'affoiblir son témoignage dans ce qu'il sait réellement du vrai.
>
> (I added this detail to free myself from the thousand-and-one questions that everyone was asking me about the customs of the country. In this I was untruthful. On his return the traveller has seen everything and provides evidence of everything out of fear that his eyewitness account is weakened in that which he knows to be really true.)[46]

The inclusion of the *sati* as a marker of authenticity is also apparent in fictional representations. The impressive production of the *bûcher* at the end of Lemierre's *La Veuve du Malabar* (1770), for example, was a contributory factor in the success of the play when it was restaged at the Comédie-Française in 1780.[47] In substantive terms, however, eighteenth-century representations of the *sati* had evolved little since the previous century. As in the seventeenth-century accounts analysed by Teltscher,[48] the woman committing *sati* is either dishonest (the traveller Daniel Moginié asserts that women are forced to commit the act of *sati* after poisoning their husbands) or she is a victim of religious superstition (as presented by Sonnerat, who consistently terms the woman 'victime', and most memorably by Voltaire).[49]

The *Indienne* was also contrasted with French women in debates about female fashion. By the mid-1780s, contemporary medical and philosophical opinion was advocating naturalism in clothing. In a treatise of 1770, the doctor Bonnaud claimed that whalebone corsets were barbarous, dangerously restricting women's breathing and nefarious during pregnancy.[50] Such counsel had previously been endorsed by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the leading proponent of naturalism, who advocated that children wear loose clothing which would not constrict their growing bodies.[51] With the all-in-one muslin chemise gown, known as the *chemise à la reine* after being popularized by Marie-Antoinette when pregnant in 1778, women's bodies were liberated from the artificiality of stays, panniers, hoops and pads, even if powdered hair and artificial complexions remained for formal occasions.[52]

In his admiring assessment of Indian women, Le Gentil uses the *Indienne* as a means of criticizing the *Française*. Reporting on the simplicity of the *Indiennes*' costume, he claims:

> Il est certain que ces filles, dans cet habillement, ont fort bonne grace; il a quelque chose de majestueux & de noble, que l'on ne trouve point dans celui de nos danseuses; il a même, quoique plus décent que le leur, un air plus voluptueux & plus séduisant. Cet habillement varie un peu selon les provinces; mais il est par-tout magnifique, & nulle part la taille de ces femmes n'est altérée: on ne connoît point dans l'Inde l'usage barbare des corps de baleine qui défigurent la nature.
>
> (It is certain that these girls, in this dress, have very good grace; there is something majestic & noble, that is not found in our dancers; they even have a more voluptuous & seductive air, even though their dress is more decent than that of our dancers. This dress varies a little according to the province; but everywhere it is magnificent, & nowhere is the form of these women altered; in India the barbarous use of whalebone corsets, which disfigure natural forms, is unknown.)[53]

The *Indienne* is a quintessence of natural femininity; yet she is also an unsettling figure for the male observer, as her 'magnificent' costume does not disguise her voluptuous figure in any way. Although Indian costume reveals less of the physical form, and does not engage in the barbarous custom of whalebone corsets like 'civilized' Europe, the Indian female body is more threatening than that of the European female. Indian dancers are more likely to corrupt the male observer with 'un air plus voluptueux & plus séduisant' (a more voluptuous & seductive air).

The appropriation of the *Indienne* in the artifice-versus-nature debate was not solely restricted to French writers. Charles Stuart, known as 'Hindoo' Stuart, an Irishman who went out to India in the 1780s, published a series of articles in the Calcutta *Telegraph* at the beginning of the nineteenth century on the advantages of Indian dress.[54] He advocated Indian clothing for British women, arguing that combining a simple Indian dress with Indian (non-whalebone) stays and the 'sweet attractive grace, and virgin modesty of our ladies, would render the pretty fair-ones altogether irresistible'.[55] Stuart exploits the differences between the British and the French to further his argument. As Collingham has observed, he 'used the interplay of differences between the Europeans themselves to complicate the juxtaposition of Britain and the Orient, by playfully using India as a vehicle for the covert introduction of republican bodily ideals into Britain',[56] but Stuart's use of juxtapositions is, in fact, more subtle than Collingham recognizes. The focus of the series is a celebration of the Hindu woman, who is depicted using a variety of conventional tropes – sexualization, objectification and homogenization:

> Let us however admit, that the majority of Hindoo women are comparatively small; their bones are not large; yet there is much voluptuousness of appearance: – a fulness that delights the eye; a firmness that enchants the senses; a sleekness and purity of skin; an expression of countenance, a grace, and a modesty of demeanour, that render them universally attractive; and I have heard some painters express the most rapturous admiration of the natural ease and elegance of their appearance, and of the

> excellence of their costume, which renders them admirable subjects for the hand of the artist.[57]

In a further act of textual voyeurism, Stuart provides a description of the Hindu female bathing:

> For the information of ladies recently arrived in the country, it may be necessary to state, that the Hindoo female, modest as the rosebud, blushing at the approach of the amorous sun-beams of the morn, bathes completely dressed; – wearing only a single robe, which in various folds completely covers her from head to foot, she finds this work of little difficulty; she often changes this garment, while yet in the river, and necessarily rises with wet drapery from the stream.
>
> Had I despotic power, our fair-ones should soon follow the example; being fully persuaded it would eminently contribute to keep the bridal torch for ever in blaze.[58]

Here, it is not 'republican bodily values' which are being encouraged; rather, it is oriental ones. It seems that only by adopting Hindu customs can European women hope to keep their husbands sexually satisfied. Where French republican rhetoric is adopted, it is employed to encourage English women into Indian fashions. Stuart closes letter 5 (to the editor of the *Telegraph*) with an impassioned plea:

> Once more, I must entreat the enlightened female, to break from the bands of aristocratic fashion; and, boldly emerging from the rude BASTILLE of her habiliments, make a due sacrifice of superfluous vesture, at the shrine of Reason; – let her dress as may best become her: neither totally rejecting fashion; nor yet following, servile, in its ample train; but, nobly spurning at constraint,
>
> 'From vulgar bounds, with brave disorder part,
> And shew a grace, beyond the reach of ART'.[59]

The call for naturalism is couched with explicit reference to the event that marked the beginning of the 1789 Revolution in France. The confining whale stays eschew rationality, when it is reason which should govern a lady's choice of fashion and her disdain of artifice.

In his preface, Stuart anticipates that on the return of peace to Europe, British ladies will 'follow the example of French ladies, in the adoption of the ancient robe, so recently revived in that country'.[60] Such approval of the foreigner across the channel, strategically employed to encourage an acceptance of Indian ideas, is neither consistent nor long lasting, and if the interplay of differences between Europeans was constantly shifting, in Stuart's case the discursive shift does not appear to be closely related to the political situation. In one of his concluding letters (15), he condemns the excesses of French dress as being typically ostentatious, and his ideal of feminine fashion remains Indian:

> I had long despaired of seeing any improvement approximate the simplicity of the Hindoo dress: but, the bold, indignant spirit of the Gallic fair, fired by the example of the men, hath recently burst from the bands of fashionable restraint; and, almost, rushed into the extreme of Spartan elegance, without controul.
>
> But, the French are always in extremes; and, I fear that they have, on this occasion, rather over-stepped the modesty of nature, and thus committed an outrage on propriety.[61]

The preceding chapter demonstrated the importance of a European dimension in French imaginings of India, and how the construct of India was used to contrast conceptions of 'Frenchness' with conceptions of a British or English identity. Stuart's discussion of French and Indian female dress is an isolated example in English-language writing,[62] but it is one which demonstrates that British and French rivalry could be played out, discursively, in the wider world as well as in continental Europe.[63]

Female Writing of the Feminine Indian *Other*

The arrival of Tipu Sultan's embassy in Paris in August 1788 provided the court artist Louise Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun with the opportunity of meeting the three Muslim ambassadors, an encounter which she recalled in her memoirs published over forty years later. Contemporary accounts suggest that there was a mutual fascination between the Muslim ambassadors and French women. In the anonymous account of the visit published in 1788, it is reported that, at the ball held in their honour at Toulon on 16 July, the ambassadors 'louèrent beaucoup le caractère aimable des dames Françoises' (greatly praised the amiable character of the French ladies), while Ruffin, the court interpreter assigned to the party, notes that on 21 August 'Nous avons été comblés d'honneur et de politesses chèz Madame de la M^{ise}. de Mesme' (We were overwhelmed with honour and pleasantries at the home of Madame de la M^{ise}. de Mesme).[64] After seeing the ambassadors at the Opéra, Vigée-Lebrun decided that she wished to paint them and actively sought out a sitting, a process which she details in her memoirs. While her account is an overtly 'self-conscious text',[65] it is nevertheless the only extant account written by a woman of direct contact with Indians on French soil in 1788.

Superficially, Vigée-Lebrun's description, which is written in the form of a letter to Princess Kourakin, bears a strong rhetorical resemblance to the other accounts written about the ambassadors.[66] The first reaction which she records is a sense of exotic fascination. The ambassadors present an object worthy of painting; significantly, she describes them with an adjective (*pittoresques*) more commonly used to describe inanimate objects, particularly landscapes, than human beings:

> En 1788, des ambassadeurs furent envoyés à Paris par l'empereur Tipoo-Saïb. Je vis ces Indiens à l'Opéra, et ils me parurent si extraordinairement pittoresques que je voulus faire leurs portraits.
>
> (In 1788, some ambassadors were sent to Paris by the emperor Tipoo-Saïb. I saw these Indians at the Opéra, and they seemed to me so extraordinarily picturesque that I wanted to paint their portraits).[67]

She adds that the ambassadors, 'pour être cuivrés, n'en avaient pas moins des têtes superbes' (despite being copper coloured, nonetheless had superb heads).[68] The 'otherness' of the Indian visitors dominates all accounts written during the ambassadors' stay in Paris, and Vigée-Lebrun's concession regarding the ambassadors' copper-coloured skin and their superb heads contains a familiar negotiation of alterity.[69]

Her account continues with a detailed description of the clothing worn by the two ambassadors during their sittings, emphasizing their luxurious nature: 'Tous deux étaient vêtus de robes de mousseline blanche, parsemées de fleurs d'or; et ces robes, espèces de tuniques avec de larges manches plissés en travers, étaient retenues par de riches ceintures' (Both were dressed in white muslin robes, covered with golden flowers; these robes, types of tunics with wide sleeves, pleated diagonally, were held with rich belts).[70] Her emphasis on their clothing encapsulates stereotypical features of the oriental other: opulent and feminized,[71] despite her painting of the first ambassador, in accordance with his request, 'en pied, tenant son poignard' (standing and holding his dagger).[72]

It is 'pure curiosité' (pure curiosity) which motivates Vigée-Lebrun and her friend Madame de Bonneuil to accept an invitation to dine with the ambassadors.[73] As Nigel Leask has demonstrated, 'curiosity' in the eighteenth century assumed two forms, the first 'a negative account of the wonder aroused by distant lands, associated with a socially exclusive desire to possess the "singular" object or else (especially in the later part of the period) a vulgar, popular interest in exotic objects for commercial profit', the second 'more positively … an inclination to knowledge which will lead the observer to a rational, philosophical articulation of foreign singularities'.[74] Vigée-Lebrun's curiosity appears to be of the former, negative kind. Her reported reaction, and that of her female friend, on entering the dining room and seeing the 'singular' Indian dining customs is one of displeased surprise:

> En entrant dans la salle à manger nous fumes un peu surprises de trouver le dîner servi par terre, ce qui nous obligea à nous tenir comme eux presque couchées autour de la table.
>
> (On entering the dining room, we were a little surprised to find the dinner served on the floor, which obliged us to sit like them, practically lying around the table.)[75]

Although the experience forces the women to lower themselves (literally and metaphorically) to the Indians' level, the French assumption of moral superiority is retained. The ambassadors serve the French women personally, by hand, with a 'fricassé de pieds de mouton à la sauce blanche, très épicée' (fricassee of sheep's feet with a very spicy white sauce), yet in a direct address to her reader Vigée-Lebrun makes clear her disgust with both the meal and the Indians' eating habits: 'Vous devez penser que nous fîmes un triste repas: il nous répugnait trop de les voir employer leurs mains bronzées en guise de cuillères' (You can no doubt imagine what a sad meal we had: it disgusted beyond imagination to see them using their bronzed hands instead of spoons).[76]

Reporting what occurred when she went back to the ambassadors' lodgings to retrieve her portrait, Vigée-Lebrun stresses the Indians' illogical and superstitious nature. Dervich-Khan refused to give her the portrait, 'prétendant qu'il fallait une âme à ce portrait' (claiming that the portrait needed a soul).[77] After retrieving her work through 'supercherie' (trickery), she recalls, the ambassador attempted to kill his *valet de chambre* on discovering that the portrait was missing; her account of the episode ends by contrasting Parisian *mœurs* (equitable and just) with credulous Indians' random acts of violence: 'L'interprète eut toutes les peines du monde à lui faire comprendre qu'on ne tuait pas les valets de chambre *à Paris*, et fut obligé de lui dire que le roi de France avait fait demander le portrait [italics added]' (The interpreter had the greatest difficulty in making him understand that *in Paris* we did not kill our *valets de chamber*, and he was obliged to say to him that the king of France had asked for the portrait).[78]

Vigée-Lebrun's representation of Tipu Sultan's ambassadors appears to be consistent with Choudhury's theory of the non-gendered metropolitan authority: 'a gendered authority, a distinction between male and female authorial ideology ... is barely recognizable in fictional constructions of the Other'.[79] The Indian ambassadors whom Vigée-Lebrun presents to her reader (Princess Kourakin in the first instance) are readily identifiable according to established literary tropes: effeminate, irrational, violent and not as civilized as the Parisians. She notes that as she and Madame de Bonneuil were leaving after dinner, a young Indian, one of the ambassadors' numerous retinue,[80] who had been taught a French song by Madame de Bonneuil while Vigée-Lebrun was painting the portrait of the ambassador, said, '"Ah! comme mon cœur pleure!"' ('Oh! how my heart cries!'), which Vigée-Lebrun finds 'fort oriental et fort bien dit' (very oriental and very well said). She has a preconception of what the oriental other will be like and he conforms perfectly to this stereotype.[81]

Nonetheless, a gendered 'authorial ideology' *is* apparent in Vigée-Lebrun's account. An awareness of the female writer as a social subject, and as different (socially, literally and sexually) from the male author, frames the entire representation of the Indian ambassadors. Certainly, easily recognizable tropes are used,

but it does not follow that the metropolitan 'authority' is ungendered. While Vigée-Lebrun assumes a cultural superiority over the Indian ambassadors, her representation is underpinned by the knowledge that she is different from masculine authors. Her letter to the princess begins with a description of her marriage, with remarks, *en passant*, about the control which her husband exerted over her beloved painting:

> Je ne pouvais suffire aux portraits qui m'étaient demandés de toutes parts, et quoique M. Le Brun prît dès lors l'habitude de s'emparer des paiements, il n'en imagina pas moins, pour augmenter notre revenu, de me faire avoir des élèves.
>
> (I was not equal to the task of completing all the portraits which were being asked of me from all directions, and although M. Le Brun from that time on was in the habit of seizing all my payments, he even had the idea, to augment our income, of making me take pupils.)[82]

Her recollection of painting the ambassadors ends with the observation:

> Ces deux tableaux ont été exposés au salon, en 1789. Après la mort de M. Le Brun, qui s'était emparé de tous mes ouvrages, ils ont été vendus, et j'ignore qui les possède aujourd'hui.
>
> (These two paintings were displayed in the salon of 1789. After the death of M. Le Brun, who had seized all my works, they were sold and I do not know who owns them today.)[83]

She may have painted the Indian ambassadors, but this did not mean that she retained any authority over her work. Her representation of the Indian ambassadors is itself an inserted episode in a wider lament about the loss of her paintings.

In Stéphanie-Félicité de Genlis's fictional *Les veillées du château, ou cours de morale à l'usage des enfants* (1782), feminization and other commonplace techniques of constructing alterity are combined with positive conceptions of European female identities. *Les veillées du château* has a specific pedagogical purpose – to provide a collection of tales suitable for children – and it was an instant success on its publication in 1782 (seven thousand copies were sold in eight days).[84] In her preface to the first volume, Genlis makes clear her intentions for her work:

> Je n'ai point eu la prétention et l'espoir de faire un ouvrage d'un mérite supérieur, mais j'ai cédé au désir d'offrir au bonnes Mères mes réflexions, & aux Enfants quelques leçons utiles.
>
> (I had absolutely neither the intention nor the hope of creating a work of superior merit, but I did give in to the desire of offering to all good Mothers my thoughts, & of giving to all Children several useful lessons.)[85]

Her disingenuous claim, positioning her work as that of a female author and contrasting it with the works of 'superior merit' penned by male authors, is a stratagem for anticipating and obviating criticism;[86] but the text itself reveals that the role of the woman as author is essential, both structurally and thematically.

The story of the *Les veillées du château* is simple. Following the departure of her husband for military service in the French army, Mme de Clémire leaves Paris for a château in Burgundy with her three children, their grandmother and the abbé Frémont. Their days are spent taking long walks in the countryside or cultivating the garden, while every evening either the grandmother or Mme de Clémire tells the children stories. Each of these stories is thus an embedded tale with an obvious moral framework and a female narrator. Gender and literary genre are imbricated through the overtly gendered discourse employed in the framing sections between each nightly tale. Mme de Clémire, for example, in her discussions with the abbé, makes it apparent that a female author is not viewed the same way as a male author:

> Mon cher Abbé, répliqua Madame de Clémire, une femme ne doit jamais souffrir qu'un homme ajoute un mot à ses ouvrages. L'homme qu'elle consulte passera toujours pour l'inventeur, & elle sera accusée de mettre son nom au travail d'un autre.
>
> (My dear Abbé, replied Madame de Clémire, a woman should never put up with a man adding a single word to her work. The man whom she consults will be viewed as the creator, and she will be accused of putting her name to someone else's work.)[87]

Mme de Clémire's comments form part of a wider intervention which counsels caution in any dealings with 'des gens de Lettres', and elucidates Mme de Genlis's difficult relationship with the *philosophes*.[88] They also, however, emphasize the role of the woman as author, narrator and teacher of children, using a strategy that relies on a binary opposition of male and female.

In the episodic travel tale 'Alphonse et Dalinde, ou la Féerie de l'Art et de la Nature, Conte moral' (narrated by Mme de Clémire),[89] the male characters, the Portuguese Alphonse and the Swedish Thélismar, travel around the world, visiting the Canary Islands, Africa, Greece, Italy, Babylon, India, Siam, the Americas, France, England and Russia, observing regional and geographic characteristics and identities. It is through these observations that the tale performs its didactic function: providing the Clémire children with essential knowledge of the world and with exemplars of good government (both individually and nationally). The 'India' which is visited in the tale, constructed using stereotypical tropes and representational strategies, would be readily recognizable to a reader at the end of the eighteenth century.[90] Arriving in the 'Cour du Grand Mogol', the European travellers are struck by the sheer opulence of the setting:

> Ils traversèrent plusieurs appartements … ils arrivèrent dans une vaste & magnifique galerie, meublé de brocard, d'or. Le Monarque était assis sur un trône de nacre de perles, parsemé de rubis & d'émeraudes. Quatre colonnes entièrement couvertes de diamants, soutenaient un baldaquin d'étoffe d'argent, bordé de saphirs et orné des festons & de glands de perles.
>
> (They crossed several apartments … they arrived in a vast and magnificent gallery, furnished with brocade and with gold. The Monarch was seated upon a throne made of mother of pearl and studded with rubies and emeralds. Four columns entirely covered with diamonds supported a canopy made of silver cloth, edged with sapphires and decorated with pearl garlands and tassels.)[91]

The description inscribes the image of the Mogul court as a luxurious, almost fantastical, place. Such linguistic markers resonate with those eighteenth-century travelogues where the author-narrator gives as his primary reason for travelling to India its unlimited size and the opportunities that it afforded for accumulating wealth.[92] The narrator, Mme de Clémire, and the author, Mme de Genlis, are, however, anxious that the listeners and the reader be aware that the description is mimetic and all facts can be verified. In a footnote appended to the passage which describes the arrival of Alphonse and Thélismar in the Indian city of Visapour (where they visit the diamond mines), the reader is didactically informed that

> Jusqu'à ce siècle on ne connaissait des mines de diamants que dans les Indes Orientales; mais on en a trouvé depuis dans le Brésil en Amérique, ainsi que des rubis, des topazes et d'autres pierres précieuses.
>
> (Before the present century, diamond mines were known of only in the East Indies, but since then such mines have been found in Brazil and in America, as well as rubies, topazes and other precious stones.)[93]

India is posited as the original source of such wealth. Intradiegetically, after finishing her narrative, Mme de Clémire asks her children 's'ils trouvaient qu'elle eût rempli l'engagement qu'elle avait pris de leur composer un conte aussi merveilleux qu'un Conte de Fées, et dont cependant tout le merveilleux serait vrai' (whether they thought that she had fulfilled the task which they had set her of creating for them a tale which was as marvellous as any fairy tale but in which, nevertheless, all the marvels were in fact true).[94] The marvels of India, it appears, have all the qualities of a fairy tale, but the added advantage of being 'real'; while the language and imagery of fantasy are used, the framing device purports to ground the story in reality. Paratexts, particularly Genlis's use of the footnote, contribute to this reality effect. In his 1993 study of English women writers, Gary Kelly examines the role of the English-language 'footnote novel', with particular reference to Elizabeth Hamilton's *Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah* (1796), asserting that the footnote novel was developed by women writers so that they could 'practise learned discourses and engage in political issues conventionally

closed to them'.[95] This practice is exactly the same as that adopted over ten years earlier by Genlis in her tale-within-a-tale of 'Alphonse et Dalinde'. Genlis's use of paratexts positions the tale in an authoritative, masculine discursive tradition, adducing and analysing ideas about oriental despotism. At the end of the visit by Alphonse and Thélismar to the Court of the High Mogul, a footnote is appended which situates the marvellous tale in reality, albeit a textual reality:

> Tout ce détail de la magnificence du Grand Mogol se trouve dans les Voyageurs. J'ai suivi particulièrement le voyage de l'Anglais Rhoë, tom. V de l'Abrégé de l'Histoire Générale des Voyages par M. de la Harpe ... J'ai joint à ces descriptions quelques détails tirés du Voyage de Tavernier, qui se trouve dans le même volume.
>
> (All the details of the magnificence of the Grand Mogul's court can be found in travelogues. I have followed particularly the journey of the Englishman Rhoë in volume five of the *Abrégé de l'Histoire Générale des voyages*, by M. de la Harpe ... I have added to these descriptions some details taken from Tavernier's travels which can be found in the same volume.)[96]

Genlis's strategies of representation are the same as those used by her male counterparts: she relies on the feminization of the Mogul court, combined with the familiar trope of the lascivious, weak and vacillating oriental despot.[97] The feminine nature of the Mogul's court is apparent as soon as Alphonse and Thélismar enter: 'Ils traversèrent plusieurs appartements & trouvèrent partout de belles femmes, superbement habillées et armées de lances, qui formaient la garde intérieure du Palais' (They crossed several apartments & everywhere saw beautiful women, superbly dressed and armed with lances, who formed the interior guard of the Palace).[98] Women in the Mogul court assume roles which are the opposite of those in French society (where Mme de Clémire's husband has departed to serve in the king's army, leaving the family behind). But this inverted world is not presented as positive. Whereas an earlier episode, relating the travels of Alphonse and Thélismar to the Hottentots, posits a link between the virtues of the society and the dominance of female values, here there is no such assertion. The Hottentots are described as being superior to all 'savage' cultures. The neutral 'Il est à remarquer' (It is to be noted), which introduces the fact that Hottentot education is entrusted to women until the child (either boy or girl) reaches eighteen, invites both the intradiegetic reader (the Clémire children) and the actual reader to attribute the virtues of the Hottentots to the pedagogical dominance of mothers:

> Enfin, leur amour pour la justice, leur courage, leur bonté, leur chasteté, les [les Hottentots] élèvent au-dessus de tous les autres Sauvages. Il est à remarquer que la jeunesse, parmi les Hottentots, est entièrement confiée à la garde des mères, jusqu'à l'âge de dix-huit ans.

(Finally, their love of justice, their courage, their goodness, their chastity, raises them [the Hottentots] above all other Savages. It is to be noted that the childhood of the Hottentots is entirely entrusted to the mothers' care, until the age of eighteen.)[99]

In contrast, the women in the Mogul's court add to the overall impression of luxury and decadence. They are superbly dressed, and although they are armed there is no sense that they would be formidable warriors. Thélismar asks Alphonse, 'croyez-vous qu'un Souverain aussi grossier, aussi ignorant puisse l'être [heureux]?' (do you believe that a Sovereign who is so gross and so ignorant can be [happy]?), and replies himself with the assessment that:

On n'aime point le Souverain qu'on méprise. Pour rendre les sujets heureux, ne faut-il pas qu'il soit éclairé, juste, estimable? D'ailleurs, celui-ci n'a point de sujets, il ne règne que sur de vils esclaves … il est despote enfin … il exerce un pouvoir tyrannique, & il éprouve toutes les craintes, toutes les terreurs, qui feront à jamais la juste punition des tyrans.

(Nobody loves a scorned Sovereign. In order to make his subjects happy, is it not necessary that he is enlightened, just and esteemed? Besides, this sovereign does not even have subjects, he is reigning only over vile slaves … in other words, he is a despot … he wields a tyrannical power & he is subject to all the fears, all the terrors, which are the justified lot of tyrants.)[100]

The moral of this pedagogical tale is thus the importance of an enlightened monarch who not only rules his subjects in a just manner but also inspires in them love and respect. The Mogul's court is dismissed as 'grossier' and 'ignorant'; its femininity, and notably the quantity of 'de belles femmes', is not advantageous.

The visit of Alphonse and Thélismar to the court of the Grand Mogul constitutes a seven-page episode in a tale spanning over two hundred pages (and this tale itself is part of the much larger three-volume work of the *Les veillées du château*). Its engagement with Indians may be slight, but it succinctly illustrates how an imaginary geography of India was constructed, and the tropes with which it was associated. In their peregrinations around the world and their contact with *sauvages*, Thélismar and Alphonse stress not only the superiority of the European traveller but also the gradations of alterity. The Hottentots epitomize the 'noble savage'; the inhabitants of the Canary Islands are observed as being unchanged since the beginning of time;[101] and it is only with the relatively 'civilized' Indians that the travellers engage.[102] As in Vigée-Lebrun's description of Tipu Sultan's ambassadors, not only are the strategies used to represent Indian alterity the same as those employed by male authors; male-authored texts themselves provide important intertexts. Indeed, in some respects, Mme de Genlis's fictional construction of 'India' appears non-gender-specific. Yet, while her descriptions of Indians are intradiegetically the same as those inscribed by male authors, the

extradiegetic framework emphasizes gender and, specifically, the gender of the author-narrator.

Other authors, less well known and less successful than Genlis, dealt with the problems of cultural and gendered otherness in different ways. Madame de Benouville's *Les Pensées errantes, avec quelques lettres d'un Indien* (1758) is a curious case, its preface comprising 213 pages. The author-narrator uses this paratext (which is referred to both as the 'Préface qui contient tout' (Preface which contains everything) and as '*des Pensées Errantes*' (*Wandering Thoughts*))[103] to question conventional narrative form and received wisdom. She states that the preface will be used to avoid an episodic structure and digressions in the narrative itself:

> Comme il y aura plusieurs épisodes dans mon Livre, & que cela interrompt la narration très désagréablement, je vais les insérer ici; c'est une façon nouvelle dont on ne s'est pas encore avisé; peut-être qu'elle réussira, car la nouveauté a toujours une grace particulière qui prévient, & une force de mérite qui séduit … J'ignore pourtant pas que cette manière de digression, est encore plus fatiguante que les épisodes, aussi j'y apporterai la même précaution; c'est-à-dire, je vais placer tout cela dans cette Préface, avec des Lettres alphabétiques qui serviront de renvoi, & que l'on trouvera également dans le cours de l'Histoire, pour y ramener ceux qui voudront sçavoir à propos de quoi elles sont faites.
>
> (As there will be several episodes in my Book, & this would interrupt the narration very disagreeably, I am going to insert them here; this is a new method of which we have not been very well informed; perhaps it will be successful, because novelty always has a particular grace which heralds it, & a force of merit which seduces … I am not ignorant, however, of the fact that this digression is even more tiring than the episodes, & I will therefore apply the same precaution; that is to say, I am going to place everything in this Preface, each with a letter of the alphabet, which will serve as point of reference & which will be found equally in the course of the Story, in order to orientate those who want to know to what they refer.)[104]

In explaining the novelty of her technique, the author-narrator privileges the role of the reader over that of the creator of the text: it is the responsibility of the reader whether s/he chooses to verify, over the course of the narrative, the episodes to which s/he is being referred. In addition to defying conventional literary expectations, *idées reçues* are challenged. Montesquieu's geo-determinism, for example, is dismissed as erroneous:

> *Ils soutenoient comme le Président de M— que c'est l'air qu'on respire, qui décide du génie des Peuples* … & moi je dis que ce n'est point le climat qui influe sur le génie des Nations, ce sont les temps & les circonstances qui en décident. Quelle différence des Romains à eux-mêmes? Sous Servius Tullius, ils étoient paisibles & fidelles Sujets; sous les Tarquins, ils changèrent tout-à-coup; l'esprit Républiquain [*sic*] se glissa dans toutes les têtes, & quiconque pensoit autrement que la multitude, étoit digne de

mort; ce fut pourtant un événement particulier qui causa cette révolution générale. Enfin cette chimére (si tant est qu c'en soit une) a été la source de leur grandeur.

(*They maintain like the President of M— that it is the air which is inhaled that decides Peoples' intelligence* ... & as for me, I say that it is not only the climate which influences the relative intelligence of Nations, it is the times & circumstances which decide. What is the difference between the successive Romans? Under Servius Tullius, they were peaceful & loyal Subjects; under the Tarquins, they suddenly changed; Republican spirit slipped into their heads, & whoever thought differently from the multitudes merited death; it was, nevertheless, a particular event which caused this general revolution. Finally this chimera (if indeed it was one) was the source of their grandeur.)[105]

These philosophical and literary meanderings, or *pensées errantes*, for all their flippant and sometimes petulant tone, with the author-narrator pitting the independence of her narrative voice against the force of received wisdom, do build to a potent climax. In the reflection designated (O_3), she asserts that '*Toutes réfléxions faites, j'aurois été une mauvaise Turque ...*' (*All considerations being equal, I would have been a very bad Turk ...*).[106] Contradicting the prevailing belief in the influence of geographical situation on mores, she claims that 'je n'aurais jamais digéré de me trouver enfermée dans un Sérail avec une troupe de femmes, comme une meute de chiens courants' (I would never have been able to stomach being locked up in a Harem with a troop of other women, like a pack of hounds), continuing:

on me dira peut-être, que si j'avois été élevée dans ce Pays-là, j'aurois fait comme les autres? mais point du tout; ma façon de penser est très-indépendante des lieux & des coutumes.

(people will perhaps say to me that if I had been raised in that Country, would I have behaved like all the others? but I do not think so; my way of thinking is independent of place and customs.)[107]

She concludes:

je bénis le Ciel de m'avoir fait naître dans un climat où l'on est très-persuadé que mon ame n'est pas d'une autre espèce que celles des hommes, & où ma vertu m'appartient toute entiere sans que l'on puisse attribuer à la vigilance d'un misérable esclave.

C'est à mon avis une sotte pensée, que de dégrader l'ame des femmes pour en prendre droit de les mépriser & de les tiranniser.

(I thank God for causing me to be born in a climate where people are persuaded that my soul is not of a different sort from that of men, & where my virtue belongs to me entirely rather than being placed under the surveillance of a miserable slave.

It is in my opinion a silly thought, which degrades women's souls in order that they have the right to scorn and terrorize them.)[108]

The image of the Turkish woman sequestered in a harem is a commonplace trope in European literature.[109] As Sara Suleri argues in relation to Anglo-Indian

women's writing, the 'woman writer has much invested in maintaining Orientalist stereotypes to mystify the East'.[110] But Benouville's reflection is more than a simple comparison of superior French and inferior Turkish mores. The Turkish woman is being appropriated to advance an argument of spiritual equality between men and women in France; the notion that a woman's soul should be the same as a man's was a subtle subversion of received wisdom.

In terms of representing India, Benouville's text is problematic. An epistolary work, it is presented as a consolation – even though the preface is finished, 'il se trouve que l'Histoire qui doit la suivre n'est pas encore en état' (it transpires that the Story which should follow it is not yet in a ready state)[111] – and the rhetoric of authenticity is employed satirically: 'je ne vous dirai point comment ce Manuscrit m'est tombé entre les mains, de peur de mentir. Vous sçaurez seulement que je l'ai traduit moi-même' (I am not going to tell you how this Manuscript fell into my hands, for fear of lying. All you will know is that I translated it myself).[112] Throughout the letters themselves, this reality effect is maintained by the appending of footnotes to explain 'Indian' terms such as '*Vertéas*': 'ce sont des espèces de Religieux Indiens, qui vivent pauvres & en Communauté' (these are a type of Indian holy men, who live an impoverished life & in the Community).[113] As in preceding French-language accounts of 'foreign' visitors to France, notably Mme de Graffigny's *Lettres d'un Péruvienne* (1747), and subsequent texts in both French and English (Madame de Monbart's *Lettres taïtiennes* (1784) and Elizabeth Hamilton's *Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah* (1796)),[114] paratexts are used to suggest a reality which is external to the text itself and which can be verified. Unlike in these other texts, however, the geography used is approximate and vague. The Indian Zurac, who writes to his friend, the Moor Zegri, after being transported to Spain by his master, displays little 'authenticity' – either geographically (Zurac's home appears more likely to be in the Middle East than in India), or in terms of the literary truth-effects which were commonly used to mark India.[115] Ultimately, the *lettres d'un Indien* serve as another example of the impenetrable nature of alterity.

Olympe de Gouges's *Zamore et Mirza; ou l'heureux naufrage, drame indien en trois actes, et en prose* (1788)[116] provides a final example of how an imagined India could be exploited by female writers. The play had an inauspicious history. Although accepted in April 1785 by the *comité de lecture* of the Comédie-Française (a notable success given the rarity of occasions that female authors were permitted to stage plays in the bastion of French drama),[117] the play, as was common, met with protracted delays. It was finally staged at the end of 1789 under the new title of *L'esclavage des nègres, ou l'heureux naufrage*, but riotous disapproval shortened its run to only three performances.[118] The verdict of the *Correspondance littéraire* and the *Moniteur universel* was that it was 'lamentable'.[119] In the preface which Gouges appended to the second published version of

the play in her *Œuvres complètes* of September 1788 (it had previously been published as an unbound *brochure* in August 1788),[120] the delays and disapproval surrounding the production are attributed to misogyny; Gouges speculates whether she would have been forced to endure 'les procédés les plus indécens' (the most indecent behaviour) if the Comédie-Française had not been aware that she was a woman.[121]

While the literary merit of Gouges's play is limited, the strategies which it uses to represent the exotic other are worthy of attention. Although the title under which she first chose to publish the work, *Zamore et Mirza; ou l'heureux naufrage, drame indien* (*Zamore and Mirza; or the happy shipwreck, Indian drama*), evokes India specifically, the text itself contains none of the markers which an eighteenth-century reader or theatre-goer would expect (Brahmins, *sati*, *bayadères*). Indeed, the title under which the play was performed in 1789, *L'esclavage des nègres* (*Black Slavery*), is far more apt.[122] The designation of the play as an Indian drama does not, however, imply the kind of flight from the real that would be expected in a similarly designated libertine *conte*, where 'indien' would be synonymous with the fantastic and the erotic.[123] The stage directions clearly indicate the geographical locus of the 'East' Indies: '*La Scène se passe d'abord dans une Isle, & ensuite dans une grande Ville des Indes Orientales*' (The scene takes place first of all on an island, & then in a large town in the East Indies); the list of characters similarly suggests the physical referent of India, with M. de Saint-Frémont described as 'Gouverneur d'une Ville & d'une Colonie Françoise dans l'Inde' (Governor of a Town & of a French Colony in India).[124] Even though geographically vague, this description would have resonated with the theatre-going public, evoking the five towns which were returned to France under the Treaty of Paris (1763) and which thereafter constituted the French colonies in India.[125] These linguistic markers notwithstanding, the subject matter (slavery) and the paratextual emphasis on the term 'nègres' are suggestive of a different geographical location: Africa.[126] Although there was slavery in the parts of India controlled by the British, and a widespread use of slaves in the French-owned sugar plantations in the Indian Ocean,[127] the growing agitation by the *philosophes* against the slave trade focused upon 'la condition du Noir dans tout l'archipel américain' (the condition of the Black in all of the American archipelago) – in other words, 'Africains' (Africans).[128] Similarly, although the use of the term 'nègre' frequently involved racial confusion, with a slippage of meaning between all non-European peoples, by the mid-eighteenth century it was more commonly being employed with specific reference to inhabitants of the African continent.[129] In the dénouement of the play, the geographical setting appears to change again. According to the stage directions, the final 'Ballet héroïque', which follows Act III and concludes the play, '*doit peindre la découverte de l'Amérique*' (*should paint the discovery of America*).[130] As with 'nègre', the

signifier 'indien' slips and refers to yet another culture ('American Indians'). The play thus conflates and stages three geographical areas of colonial expansion: India, Africa and the Americas.

This conflation of various identities under the single signifier 'indien' was not unique to Gouges, or to French writing. In Mariana Starke's *The Sword of Peace; or, A Voyage of Love* (1789), the dramatization of the Anglo-Indian community on the Coromandel coast reveals a similar confusion between the indigenous populations of India and those peoples seized as slaves from Africa.[131] As has been discussed in the Introduction, while philosophical discourses attempted a precise geographic definition of *Inde*, the trading term '*Indes*' referred to a vast geographical area. An anonymous writer, assessing French trade with the 'East Indies' in 1787, described it thus:

> On comprend en France, sous la dénomination d'établissemens des grandes Indes, non-seulement toutes les colonies & comptoirs de la nation au sud & à l'est de l'Asie, mais aussi tous les établissemens & portes à l'est de l'Afrique.
>
> (It is understood in France, under the name the establishments of the East Indies, not only all the colonies & trading posts of the nation to the south & east of Asia, but also all those trading establishments & ports to the east of Africa.)[132]

Although the vastness and vagueness of the Indies in the French imagination left them open to occupation by exotic discourses, Brown's assessment of the extent to which the play is divorced from reality is somewhat misguided.[133] Certainly, Gouges's India resonates with other products of the French literary imagination, notably the *conte*, *Mirza et Fatmé, conte indien, traduit de l'Arabe* (1754), but the theme of the injustice of slavery is prominent, not least in the first act, which contains an impassioned plea in favour of human equality:

> [Zamore] Cette différence est bien peu de chose, elle n'existe que dans la couleur; mais les avantages qu'ils ont sur nous sont immenses. L'art les a mis au-dessus de la nature; l'instruction en a fait des Dieux, & nous ne sommes que des hommes. Ils se servent de nous dans ces climats comme ils se servent des animaux dans les leurs. Ils sont venus chez nous, & se sont emparés de nos terres, de nos fortunes, & nous ont fait esclaves pour récompense des richesses qu'ils nous ont ravies; ce sont nos propres champs qu'ils moissonnent, & ces moissons sont arrosées de nos sueurs & de nos larmes. La plupart de ces maîtres barbares nous traitent avec une cruauté qui fait frémir la nature; notre espèce trop malheureuse s'est habituée à ces châtimens. Ils se gardent bien de nous instruire; si nos yeux venoient à s'ouvrir, nous aurions horreur de l'état où ils nous ont réduits, & nous pourrions secouer un joug aussi cruel que honteux.
>
> (This difference is really very little, and it exists only in colour; but the advantages that they have over us are immense. Art has placed them above nature; education has made of them Gods, & we are only men. They make use of us in these climes as they make use of animals in their lands. They have come to our home, & they have seized our lands, our fortunes, & have made slaves of us as thanks for the riches which they

> have ravished from us; it is from our own fields that they reap their harvests; & these harvests are watered with our sweat & our tears. The majority of our barbarous masters treat us with cruelty which would make nature shudder; our utterly unfortunate people are used to these punishments. They are careful not to educate us; if our eyes were opened, we would be horrified at the state to which we have been reduced; & we might attempt to shake off the yoke which is as cruel as it is shameful.)[134]

This hyperbolic speech, so typical of the melodramatic writing which developed in France during the 1750s and the 1760s in the *drame* or *genre sérieux* of authors such as Denis Diderot and Louis-Sébastien Mercier, appropriates the Rousseauian language of nature and society to challenge the validity of slavery. A universalizing perspective is employed by a female writer who, as a result of her gender, was deemed unable to covenant and thus found herself outside the social contract, ventiloquizing an Indian slave.[135] Received ideas of gender roles are thus integrated with a theatrical representation of racial otherness. Colonialism, slavery and gender are further imbricated by the dramatic action. The narrative starts *in medias res*, Zamore and Mirza having fled following the attempted rape of Mirza: 'Tu crois, Zamore, que ce méchan Régisseur avoit juré ma perte? Je ne l'aimois point, & lorsqu'il voulut forcer mes sentimens, je lui dis que je n'aimois que toi' (Do you believe, Zamore, that this horrible overseer had promised himself my downfall? I didn't love him at all, and when he wished to force my affections, I told him that I loved only you).[136] In his impassioned invective, Zamore, with his description of 'des richesses qu'ils nous ont ravies' (the riches which they have ravished from us) creates a resonance between the feminized, colonized land (open to sexual occupation by the invader) and the physical molestation of the female slave Mirza. As Brown has demonstrated, in late 1788 or early 1789 the play was revised and two explicit discussions of slavery added.[137] The character M. de Saint-Frémont became 'Governeur d'une Île dans l'Inde',[138] which is presumably what prompts Brown's assertion that the play is transported geographically to the American West Indies. His claim that the two slaves are refashioned as '*nègres*' is, nevertheless, erroneous.[139] The list of characters maintains that Zamore is an 'Indien instruit' and Mirza a 'jeune Indienne'.[140] It would appear that the critical desire to pinpoint a specific geographical locus for the action of the play is a diversion from what Gouges's revisions and conflations reveal about India, Africa and the Americas in the French imagination: geographically unspecific, and subject to continuing confusions and approximations regarding race and culture.

Although Vigée-Lebrun, Genlis, Benouville and Gouges employ representational strategies which resonate with those in the imagined Indias of their male counterparts, their adoption of gendered discourses is not of that imperialistic kind, identified in nineteenth-century texts, which posits the East as feminine, therefore weak, therefore exploitable.[141] Even though Gouges posits a link

between the ravished colonized land and the attempted rape of the *Indienne*, the colonized female is not, as in male-authored texts, simply presented as a victim in need of rescue by the enlightened European male. Postcolonial readers might take exception to Genlis's slight engagement with India and her conflation of Hindus and Muslim Moguls, and to Gouges's ethnic and geographical confusions, yet these four texts show that in the eighteenth century the discourses of gender were linked to the representation of racial and cultural differences and that feminization was not a strategy of inscription confined to the English-language male writer alone.

4 MYTHICAL INDIA

By 1815 the European intellectual conquest of India was well advanced. The landmass had been mapped; attempts had been made to classify its peoples and to analyse their religious, political and social institutions.[1] Hindu history, frequently viewed during this period as synonymous with 'Indian' history, had been integrated into histories of humankind, and ancient Indian civilization compared with those of Rome and Greece.[2] An essential element of this intellectual process was the exploration of Hindu mythology – that is, the traditional narratives with which the culture perpetuated its social customs and accounted for the origins of society. J. Z. Holwell's *Interesting Historical Events, Relative to the Province of Bengal, and the Empire of Indostan* (1766), published in French translation in 1768, considered 'mythology' alongside 'cosmology' and, despite its inaccuracies, was widely influential in France, not least among Voltaire and his acolytes;[3] Dow's *The History of Hindustan translated from the Persian to which are prefixed two dissertations concerning the Hindoos* (1768–72)[4] and the scholarly research carried out by the Asiatic Society of Bengal into Indian culture similarly reached a significant readership. Sir William Jones's *Hymns* to Hindu deities, six of which first appeared in the *Asiatick Miscellany* of 1785, was the first European text to make explicit use of Hindu mythology as a literary source but it was his translation of the play *Sacontala* (first published in 1789) which was a success in Britain, France and the German states.[5]

Like their British counterparts, French writers made use of Hindu mythology in order to fashion images of India, both exploiting Hindu mythology as a literary source which could be assimilated into the European canon of fables, and schematizing Hindu civilization to serve specific ideological ends. In some respects, such textual appropriations appear to support Said's theory that Europeans believed India incapable of representing, or speaking for, itself.[6] The purpose of this chapter, however, is not to argue, after Said, that the intellectual and military conquests of India necessarily went hand in hand; nor is it to argue that Indians had no involvement or influence in the image generated of Hindu mythology.[7] For Europeans living in India, such as Antoine Polier, Claude Martin, and Raymond (who adopted the name Hājī Mustafā after converting

to Islam), information was drawn from Hindu and Persian texts and from the Indian intelligentsia.[8] Moreover, knowledge was shared between British, German and French intellectuals. Accordingly, between 1754 and 1815, the French intellectual 'conquest' of India made steady progress – at precisely the time when French military and political influences in India were declining.

The aims of this chapter are twofold. First, it will examine the various uses made of Hindu mythology. Moving from travellers' recurring and somewhat vague notions of Indian idolatry during the middle decades of the century, to more specific references to Hindu fables after the publication of translations of Hindu works (some authentic, some fake), the chapter will elucidate the ways in which Hindu mythology, as a European intellectual discovery, was commodified in accordance with French cultural demands and expectations. Following this overview, a more detailed analysis of two theatrical productions (a 1783 play by La Harpe and an 1810 opera by Jouy) will establish how borrowings from Hinduism were assimilated into the French literary tradition. This privileging of Hinduism, and the attendant neglect of Islam and Mogul India, demonstrates that Inden's assertion about nineteenth-century British theorists is equally true of eighteenth-century French thinkers and writers: for them, 'the essence of the religions of India is the religion of the Brahmans'.[9] The second aim of the chapter is to explore the ways in which French texts created their own myths about French personnel in India, particularly Dupleix and Lally. Following Gildea's study of how French political groupings made use of the past, the analysis will employ the term 'myth' not 'in the sense of fiction, but in the sense of a construction of the past elaborated by a political community for its own political ends'.[10] Determined by notions of lost grandeur and missed opportunities, myth-making was a deliberate strategy for representing the French encounter with India after the recall of Dupleix in 1754.[11]

Narratives of Hindu Mythology

A diverse range of texts engaged with the subject of Hindu mythology in the second half of the eighteenth century. Historical surveys such as André-Guillaume Contant d'Orville's *Histoire des différens peuples du monde contenant les cérémonies religieuses et civiles* (1770–1) and Jean-Rodolphe Sinner's *Essai sur les dogmes de la métempsychose et du purgatoire* (1771) compared Hindu beliefs and practices with other religions, specifically Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Confucianism. From 1790, publications appeared which claimed to be translations of authentic Hindu texts: Louis-Mathieu Langlès's *Fables et contes indiens* (1790) and Polier's *Mythologie des Indous* (1809), the latter taking its information from Persian sources collected during Polier's lengthy stay in India.[12] More generally, Hindu mythology was seen as an essential subject for inclusion in travelogues. In the

anonymous travel narrative *Tableau historique de l'Inde* (1771), the author follows a geographical definition of what Europeans understand by the term the 'Indes Orientales' (East Indies) with an outline of 'Hindu mythology', including a discussion of the *Vĕdam* (Veda). The second book of Sonnerat's *Voyage aux Indes Orientales et à la Chine* (1782), 'Introduction à la religion des Indiens, ou Abrégé de leur Mythologie', similarly complements descriptions of the geography, history and customs of India with information about Hindu mythology.[13]

In both discursive accounts and overtly fictional genres, the representation of mythology showed a marked evolution between the recall of Dupleix and the end of the Napoleonic Wars. Travel accounts published in the middle of the century revealed an anxiety to condemn the barbaric and idolatrous nature of Hindu worship. For example, the unpublished memoirs of Poivre, who travelled to India between 1745 and 1747, resound with superlatives concerning the 'shameful' nature of religion in Malabar:

> La religion des Malabars est peut-être la plus extravagante, la plus honteuse pour la raison humain et la plus infâme qu'on puisse imaginer. Les dieux qu'ils adorent sous les noms de Brama, Vichnous, Rutrem, Puléyar etc. sont les dieux de l'infamie. Le culte qu'on leur rend est proportionné à leur qualité, aux histoires qu'on en raconte, tout s'accorde parfaitement avec le gout de la nation qui a de tels dieux. La religion voluptueuse a transporté dans le ciel toutes les passions de la terre en rendant les dieux semblables aux hommes au lieu de rendre ceux-ci semblables aux dieux … Leurs histoires sont si ridicules, remplies de puérilités que j'aye honte de les écrire.
>
> (The religion of the inhabitants of Malabar is perhaps the most extravagant, the most shameful for human reason and the most infamous that can be imagined. The gods that they worship under the names of Brama, Vichnous, Rutrem, Puléyar etc. are the gods of infamy. The form of worship which they give to them is proportional with their quality, the stories which are told about them, everything fits perfectly with the tastes of a nation which has such gods. The voluptuous religion has transported into the sky all the passions of the earth, making the gods like men rather instead of making the latter similar to gods … Their stories are so ridiculous, so full of puerilities, that I am ashamed to write them.)[14]

In the anonymous *Tableau historique de l'Inde*, the author avoids a consideration of religious practices to focus instead on a textualized Hinduism, examining the Veda as a founding text of Hindu mythology. Opening with a reflection on contemporaneous Indomania, the chapter is critical of what modern scholars would view as the European invention of Hinduism: 'On lit chaque jour de mauvaises traductions du Vedam; beaucoup d'Auteurs ont imaginé des maximes, des préceptes, qu'ils ont donné comme traduits de ce fameux livre' (Every day bad translations of the Veda can be read; many Authors have invented maxims and precepts, which they present as though translated from this famous book).[15] The author continues by comparing Hinduism negatively with Christianity:

> Le Vedam qui n'est, à bien prendre, qu'un tissu de fables & de singularités Orientales, a bien une autre autorité chez les Indiens que l'Evangile parmi les Chrétiens, & cependant tout nous porte à aimer, à chérir un Dieu bienfaisant, tout paroît conspirer contre les Dieux des Indiens, dont la fureur est atroce.
>
> (The Veda, which is, if it is understood correctly, only a fabric of fables & Oriental singularities, has as much authority among Indians as the Gospels have among Christians, & while everything nevertheless leads us to love, to cherish a munificent God, everything conspires against the Indian Gods, whose anger is atrocious.)[16]

Hindu mythology is not summarily dismissed, but the frame of reference for the assessment of the 'fabric of fables & Oriental singularities' remains resolutely Christian.

In the two decades before the French Revolution, the arrival in France of genuine and forged Indian texts, of which the most famous was the counterfeited *Ezourvedam*, published by Guillaume Emmanuel Joseph Guilhem de Clermont Lodève in 1775, saw Indian myths moving from the realm of anecdotal eyewitness reports to appear in scholarly, exegetical accounts, which were widely quoted, if not always attributed.[17] This process was further stimulated by the publication of French translations of Holwell's *Interesting Historical Events, Relative to the Province of Bengal, and the Empire of Indostan* (1768) and Dow's *The History of Hindostan* (1768–71). Langlès's *Fables et contes indiens*, published at the beginning of the French Revolution, emphasized the authenticity of its sources: as translations, the fables offered a representation of India which was not merely the product of a French imagination.[18]

The arrival of Indian texts in France, along with translations of the work of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (founded in 1784), may have facilitated the discovery of textual Hinduism and mythology, but such developments did not prevent the continuation of French myth-making as a means of explaining religious and social practices in India. Where Hindu mythology and mores were concerned, French myth-making operated in two ways. The first appears to support a Saidean conceptualization of colonialism, in which silent Indians are represented by the superior Western observer. For example, in the article 'Sur l'infanticide chez les Hindous et chez quelques autres nations' by the editor of the 1812 volume of the *Annales des Voyages*, a hierarchy of races is constructed, with the Hindu mentality being posited as an explanation for the practice of infanticide:

> Ce n'est que chez les peuples de races hindoue et malaie qu'on voit l'infanticide élevé au rang d'un principe d'honneur et de religion. Ces nations paroissent avoir dans leur imagination une sorte d'excentricité naturelle, d'exaltation tranquille, qui les porte à commettre de sang-froid les actions les plus atroces et les plus sanguinaires. Le nègre même, quoique doué d'une intelligence encore inférieure à celle d'Hindoue, ne paroît pas susceptible du délire auquel se livre quelquefois le superstitieux disciple des bramins.

(It is only amongst the people of the Hindu and Malay races that infanticide is elevated to the rank of a principle of honour and religion. These nations appear to have in their imaginations a sort of natural eccentricity, a tranquil exaltation, which causes them to commit with equanimity the most atrocious actions and the most bloody. Even the Negro, blessed with an intelligence inferior to that of the Hindu, does not appear susceptible to the delirium to which the superstitious disciples of the Brahmins sometimes offer themselves.)[19]

The second form of myth-making posited Indian society and culture as an ideal. In the introduction to his volume of translated Indian fables, Langlès, for example, proposed that the Hindu religion was exemplary:

La religion qu'ils [les Brahmanes] professent est fondée sur les vrais principes de la loi naturelle, dictée par l'humanité la plus tendre et par la plus sublime philosophie. Cette religion respectable, jusques dans ses erreurs, qui contribuent à la conversion du plus petit insecte, se vante comme toutes les autres d'une origine céleste.

(The religion that they [the Brahmins] profess is based upon the true principles of natural law, dictated by the most tender humanity and the most sublime philosophy. This religion is respectable even in its errors, which play a large part in the conversion of the smallest insect, claiming for it, like all others, a celestial origin.)[20]

Later in the introduction, Langlès cautions his readers against the feminine qualities of the Hindu fables, but his respect for the religion remains undiminished.[21] His definition of Hinduism bears a remarkable resemblance to that presented by Voltaire in the *Essai sur les mœurs et l'esprit des nations*, first published in 1756. Here, Voltaire argues that the religion of the ancient Brachmanes was based on universal human reason and an innate sense of right:

Il faut du temps pour établir des lois arbitraires; mais il n'en faut point pour apprendre aux hommes rassemblés à croire un Dieu, et à écouter la voix de leur propre cœur.

Les premiers brachmanes, étant donc à-la-fois rois et pontifes, ne pouvaient guère établir la religion sur la raison universelle.

(It takes time to establish arbitrary laws; but it takes no time to teach men gathered together to believe in one God and to listen to the voices of their own hearts.

The first Brachmanes, being thus kings and pontiffs at the same time, could hardly fail to establish religion according to universal reason.)[22]

Langlès does not conceal the fact that he had read and admired the works of Voltaire. He concurs with Voltaire's assessment of the relative ages of Chinese, Egyptian and Hindu civilizations, agreeing that the Indians were the most ancient of peoples.[23] Furthermore, he unquestioningly propagates Voltaire's interpretation of ancient Hinduism and the Brachmanes' religion. As will be discussed in Chapter 6, Voltaire's conception of Hinduism was distorted, both by his desire to find a religious system that challenged the Judeo-Christian one, and by his reliance on fake sources. This notwithstanding, as the work of Langlès

demonstrates, Voltaire's myth of an ideal ancient Hinduism was still influential twelve years after his death.

As discursive accounts of Hinduism circulated, French dramatizations of India began to draw more heavily on received notions of Hindu mythology. The first such play, La Harpe's five-act *Les Brames* (1783), was neither a critical nor a public success and was withdrawn by the author after only three performances: one at Versailles, on 4 December 1783, before Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette; and two in Paris, on 15 and 17 December 1783.[24] The drama was an unhappy attempt to capitalize on the popular success of Lemierre's *La Veuve du Malabar* (1770), which was revived at the Comédie-Française in 1780. Whereas Lemierre's play was a fictional romance which saw a beautiful Hindu widow rescued by a French general from enforced immolation at the hands of evil Brahmins,[25] La Harpe drew his inspiration from Voltaire's work, which conflated Hinduism with the religion of the Brahmins.[26] The narrative is based on a Hindu legend in which the Emperor Akbar, anxious to learn the principles of the Brahmin faith, sends the son of his secretary to Benares, where the young man falls in love with the chief Brahmin's daughter. Although there has been some critical controversy over La Harpe's source for the story (found in Dow's *History of Hindoustan* and reproduced verbatim in Raynal's *Histoire des établissemens et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes*),[27] it is clear that his ideas were taken from Indian texts, albeit mediated by European translations. La Harpe alters the story somewhat. In his *Les Brames*, Akébare, son of the Muslim emperor (here called Timur-Kan), travels to Benares, where he is adopted by Obarez, the chief Brahmin, and is initiated into the Brahmins' laws. He falls in love with Obarez's daughter, Indamène, but the day before his marriage there is news of Timur-Kan's arrival. Contrasting the tolerance of Obarez with the emperor's desire to spread the Muslim faith by force, the play pits belligerent Islam (the 'mère de l'esclavage' (mother of slavery)) against the Brahmins, who 'Ne parle[nt] au nom d'un Dieu que pour le faire aimer' (Speak the name of a God simply to inspire love for him).[28]

The play has notable exotic and geographic markers. The Indian setting is swiftly established, with Akébare described in Obarez's opening oratory as having been baptized in the Ganges; in Act I, scene iv, the emperor is reported to have been carried on an elephant; Indamène, believing her betrothed Akébare to be dead, expresses the desire to carry out the act of *sati*; and, in the final act, all the Brahmins threaten self-immolation when confronted by Timur-Kan's despotism and his intention to destroy the Brahmins' temple.[29] Like Langlès's preface to his translated *Fables et contes indiens* (1790), the play resonates with Voltaire's theory of Hinduism as the most ancient of civilizations. The ideas underpinning Obarez's opening address bear a striking resemblance to Voltaire's argument about the age of Hindu civilization in his *Essai sur les mœurs* (1756),

Précis du siècle de Louis XV (1763) and *Fragments sur quelques révolutions dans l'Inde* (1773). Speaking to the assembled Brahmins, Obarez declares:

> Vous seuls l'avez instruit: les utiles secrets
> Qu'à l'Egypte enseigna le fabuleux Hermès,
> Et tous ceux qu'autrefois, des climats de l'aurore,
> Aux rives d'Ausonie apporta Pytagore,
> La sagesse et les arts de ces Grecs si vantés.
>
> (You alone taught it: the useful secrets
> That the fabulous Hermes taught in Egypt,
> And all those from long ago, from the dawn of time,
> Which to the edges of Ausonia brought Pythagoras,
> The wisdom and the arts of these so-celebrated Greeks.)[30]

Just as Voltaire had idealized the ancient Brachmanes, so too does La Harpe's Obarez present the Brahmins as exemplary in their separation of secular and spiritual duties:

> D'un prêtre de Brama tel est le caractère:
> Il n'avilit jamais son noble ministère;
> Il ne va point chercher les rois dans leur palais;
> Mais à les respecter il instruit leurs sujets ...
> Et sans tromper le peuple, il sait le consoler.
>
> (Of a priest of Brahma such is the character:
> He never sullies his noble ministry.
> He does not seek out kings in their palaces;
> But shows his respect by instructing their subjects ...
> Without deceiving the people, he knows how to console them.)[31]

The influence of Voltaire's philosophy is further apparent in Timur-Kan's *volte-face* to enlightened kingship in the final scene. More generally, the narrative and the action display intertexts with Prosper Jolyot Crébillon's *Rhadamiste et Zénobie* (1711), inscribing the legend of the Emperor Akbar within the French dramatic tradition.[32]

In 1810 a second dramatization inspired by Hindu mythology enjoyed greater success. The opera *Les Bayadères*, with a libretto by Jouy and music by Charles Simon Catel, staged the story of the king of Benares, Demaly, who has to choose a wife from the three favourites in his kingdom.[33] The work relies on several plot intrigues, including an invading Maratha army and the imprisonment of the king. The principal *bayadère*, Laméa, saves the king and brings about the defeat of the Maratha army but refuses to marry him as such an action is against God's law. Forced to choose a wife, the king devises a test: he pretends to be dying as the result of a poison arrow fired by the chief of the Marathas and proposes marriage to the three favourites. Not wishing to carry out self-immolation

on the funeral pyre of the soon-to-be-dead king, all three refuse. Only Laméa is willing 'Viendra s'unir à lui par le plus saint des nœuds' (to come and unite herself to him by the holiest of ties).[34] As she throws herself on the funeral pyre, the king assumes his divine form and the lovers are united amid great celebration. In the 'Notice historique' which he appended to the published libretto, Jouy claims historical inspiration for his work: the *Puranas* and the story of *Schirven* (Shiva) and his avatar, the rajah Devendren.[35] At some length he explains that the profession of the *bayadères* was created to perpetuate the memory of a young and beautiful temple dancer willing to commit self-immolation for the earthly incarnation of the god Shiva. He thus offers a mythological explanation for the *devadasis* (*bayadères*), who presented a troubling phenomenon to European travellers, seeming to unite prostitution with religious worship. Adopting a quasi-anthropological idiom, he attempts to describe the *devadasis* in a neutral manner, eschewing ethnocentric assumptions about this exotic staple:

> A ce nom indien de Devadansis, Devalialès, les Français ont substitué celui de Bayadères, par corruption du mot Belladeiras (danseuses), que les Portugais employèrent pour désigner cette classe nombreuse de jeunes filles consacrées tout-à-la-fois au culte des dieux et de la volupté.
>
> (For the Indian name of *Devadansis*, *Devalialès* [*devadasis*], the French substituted that of *Bayadères*, a corruption of the word *Belladeiras* (dancers), which the Portuguese employed to designate this numerous class of young girls devoted at the same time to the worship of gods and to voluptuousness.)[36]

The paratexts of Jouy's libretto thus seek to position it as an authentic representation of India. A footnote offers the reader a proto-ethnographic explanation of the gods 'Wisnou, Brama, Schirven' (Vishnu, Brahma, Shiva).[37] Reference is even made to the 'savant orientaliste' (erudite orientalist) Sir William Jones and the Asiatic Society, although Jouy deplores the fact that Jones has failed to consider the parallels between the *bayadères* and the Vestals in ancient Rome.[38]

Despite adducing genuine Indian mythology as the source for the opera, the libretto is chiefly characterized by European dramatic conventions; it is, above all, a sentimental representation of sublime love. Laméa asserts, in a classical fashion, that her decision to become a *sati* is 'le triomphe de l'amour' (the triumph of love).[39] The image of the voluptuous *bayadère* as an exemplar of fidelity was already a commonplace in European sources. Similar accounts of the honest prostitute who voluntarily sacrifices herself on the funeral pyre of the man to whom she is devoted had appeared in Abraham Rogerius's *Le Théâtre de l'idolâtrie ou la porte ouverte* (1663) and d'Orville's *Histoire des différens peuples du monde* (1770–1).[40] Sonnerat's illustrated travel account, *Voyage aux Indes orientales* (1782), while emphasizing the licentiousness of the *bayadère* with a frequent use of the low-register term 'putain' (whore),[41] rationalizes

the act of *sati* by inscribing the act within a mythological framework. Goethe adapted Sonnerat's account of the *bayadère* in his 1797 poem 'Der Gott und die Bajadere', subtitled 'Indische Legende' (Indian Legend); but whereas Sonnerat is somewhat ironic in his representation of the *fille de joie*'s faithfulness, Goethe, like Jouy, emphasizes the self-sacrificing nature of the *bayadère*'s love. In a further act of Eurocentric reinscription, Goethe recalls Christian legend and the figure of Mary Magdalene in the repentant heaven-bound *bayadère*.[42] Nor did this process of European cross-fertilization end with Goethe, whose representation of the *bayadère* was praised for its evocative authenticity in Madame de Staël's *De l'Allemagne* (1807).[43]

While overtly fictional genres exploited the romantic possibilities of the Devendren myth, the narrative of the god and the *bayadère* continued to appear in factual discourses. In 1801, Noël published his *Dictionnaire de la fable*, a comparative study of classical civilizations, presented in a similar form to those being published contemporaneously in England.[44] Noël's entry on the *bayadères* adduces the same story as a means of explaining how *filles de joie* could be used for holy worship:

> On est étonné d'abord de voir des filles de cette profession choisies pour honorer la divinité; mais ces filles des pagodes sont privilégiés, et on les regarde comme des chéries des dieux; depuis l'aventure arrivée à l'une d'elles. Dévendiren, sous la figure d'un bel homme, alla trouver un jour une courtisane, pour éprouver si elle lui serait fidèle. Il lui promit une grande récompense, et en fut bien traité toute la nuit. Le dieu contrefit la mort, et la courtisane le crut de si bonne foi, qu'elle voulut absolument être brûlée avec lui, quoiqu'on lui représentât que ce n'était pas son mari. Comme elle allait se précipiter sur les flammes, Dévendiren se réveilla, avoua sa supercherie, la prit pour femme et l'emmena dans son paradis.
>
> (To begin with we are surprised to see girls of this profession chosen to honour God; but these girls of the pagodas are privileged, and they have been seen as cherished by the gods since one of them had an adventure. Dévendiren, in the form of a handsome man, went one day to find a courtesan, to test whether she would be faithful to him. He promised her a great reward, and was kindly treated all night. The god faked his own death, and the courtesan believed it to such an extent that she wished to be burned with him, even though it was pointed out to her that he was not her husband. As she was about to throw herself into the flames, Dévendiren woke up, admitted his deception, and took her as his wife into paradise.)[45]

Increasing interest in Hindu mythology at the Académie Royale des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres from 1760 established Hindu mythology and Indian culture as a subject of academic enquiry. Under the Directoire this work was continued with the creation of the École des Langues orientales vivantes in Paris in 1795. As the works of La Harpe, Langlès and Jouy illustrate, scholarly interest did not prevent the propagation of idealized and romanticized images of Hindu civilization. The increase in objective knowledge did not necessarily change the strategies of repre-

sentation used; nor did it preclude the privileging of Hindu India at the expense of other religions. What it did provide was material which was adapted and reinscribed across a range of genres, in France, in Britain and in Germany.

The Myth of the French in India

After 1763 India increasingly became the locus for a third form of myth-making, and one which was specifically French: the site of a lost empire. This form of myth-making did not engage with the inhabitants of the subcontinent, unashamedly presenting India as an empty stage to be occupied by European powers: the French, the British and, to a lesser extent, the Portuguese. Myths were generated around three main subjects: the defeat of 1763 and the culpability of Lally; Dupleix and the French system in India before 1763; and the notion of the French as potential liberators of India.

The nature and extent of France's defeat in 1763 were propitious for the creation of myths, and the political consequences were keenly debated in Paris. Two very public court cases generated more than a thousand pages of published *mémoires judiciaires* and letters.[46] The first of these, after his recall in 1754, was Dupleix's protracted legal dispute with the Compagnie des Indes, arising from his contested claim that the Compagnie owed him approximately seven million *livres*.[47] The second was the trial of Lally for culpability in the matter of the French defeat in India, culminating in his execution in May 1766. Together, these cases ensured that the French presence in India remained a topic of interest to Parisian reading elites until the settlement of Dupleix's financial dispute in 1790, twenty-seven years after his death. The trial of Lally engendered conflicting textual accounts of what had happened; using rhetorical devices such as direct appeals to the public,[48] the published *mémoires* encouraged metropolitan readers to view the European encounter with India as a theatrical spectacle – as would be the case two decades later during the impeachment of Hastings by the British parliament.[49] A further point of comparison between the trial of Lally and the impeachment of Hastings was the vexed question of the responsibility of European protagonists when overseas: as the *Tableau historique de l'expédition de l'Inde* remarks, 'Ce qui étoit crime dans l'Inde ne peut certainement devenir acte méritoire en Europe' (What was a crime in India can certainly not become an act of merit in Europe).[50]

Mémoires such as the *Tableau historique de l'expédition de l'Inde* and *Vraies causes de la perte de l'Inde* (both 1766) were purportedly Lally's recorded testimonies in response to the Procureur-Général, and accordingly had an overt polemical agenda: vindicating the actions of Lally and refuting his culpability for the devastation of Pondichéry.[51] They also contain the earliest written example of a mythologizing representation of the French encounter with India. *Vraies*

causes de la perte de l'Inde opens with a description of the attacks which have plagued Lally since his return to the *métropole*:

> Les calomnies que les ennemis du Comte de Lally ont répandues dans une multiplicité de libelles tendent toutes à persuader au Public que le Comte de Lally est non-seulement cause de la perte de Pondichéry, mais qu'il est cause de la perte de toute l'Inde.
>
> (The calumnies which the Comte de Lally's enemies have propagated through a number of tracts all tend to persuade the Public that the Comte de Lally is not only the cause of the loss of Pondichéry, but that he is the reason for the loss of all India.)[52]

Significantly, while Lally challenges the allegation that he is responsible for the loss, he does not contest the assertion that the French had lost 'all' of India – a specious description when the French, in fact, had never possessed all of India. Although Dupleix, during his governorship of Pondichéry, had succeeded in extending French influence in the Deccan region, French military and economic control was neither a monopoly nor permanent.

Bussy's responding *mémoire*, while contradicting Lally's interpretation of the events, subscribes to the same myth of the French in India.[53] The 'Avertissement' preceding the *mémoire* summarizes his argument:

> Il [Bussy] ne craint point au contraire d'ajouter que si le sieur de Lally eut daigné l'écouter, ou avoir quelques égard pour ses avis, on se seroit aujourd'hui dans le cas ni de demander, ni de dire quelles ont été les CAUSES DE LA PERTE DE L'INDE.
>
> (On the contrary, he [Bussy] does not fear to add that if M. de Lally had deigned to listen to him, and to have some regard for his opinions, we would not be in the position today of either asking, or of saying, what are the CAUSES OF THE LOSS OF INDIA.)[54]

The grandiose phrase 'the loss of India' is used without explanation or justification. Lally's responsibility might have been in dispute, but the extent of the crime of which he was accused was considered axiomatic.

The debate about Lally's culpability did not end with his execution. Found guilty of charges including extortion and the abuse of power, he was publicly executed on the Place de la Grève on 9 May 1766.[55] His son, Trophime-Gérard de Lally-Tolendal, immediately launched a campaign to restore his father's reputation, a process which generated more *mémoires* and which benefited from Voltaire's intervention. In 1778, Lally's trial was deemed a miscarriage and his arrest overturned. Voltaire's *Fragments sur quelques révolutions dans l'Inde* (1773) was a polemic in support of Lally's rehabilitation. His condemnation of the execution is unequivocal: it is state-sanctioned murder committed in the name of justice:

> Il parut enfin aux hommes sages et compatissants que la condamnation du général Lally était un de ces meurtres commis avec le glaive de la justice. Il n'est point de nation civilisée chez qui les lois faites pour protéger l'innocence n'aient servi quelquefois à l'opprimer.
>
> (Finally, it seemed to all wise and sympathetic men that the condemnation of General Lally was one of those murders committed by the sword of justice. There is no other civilized nation wherein the laws designed to protect the innocent have served to oppress them.)[56]

Evident throughout the *Fragments sur quelques révolutions dans l'Inde* is a certain ambivalence about the French presence in India.[57] Discussing the injustices of Lally's trial, Voltaire posits the distance between the *métropole* and the *comptoirs* as an insuperable obstacle to an accurate understanding of the events in India:

> Il fallait lire et relire un tas énorme de papiers, mille écrits contradictoires d'opérations militaires, faites dans des lieux dont la position et le nom étaient inconnus aux magistrats.
>
> (It was necessary to read and reread an enormous pile of papers, thousands of contradictory written documents about military operations, carried out in places of which the position and the names were unknown to the magistrates.)[58]

His account is characteristically subjective. He is, for example, unsympathetic to Dupleix, whom he describes as opportunistic and self-aggrandizing, remarking that 'Pondichéri [*sic*] restait dans la disette, dans l'abattement et dans la crainte tandis qu'on envoyait en France des médailles d'or frappées en honneur et au nom de son gouverneur' (Pondichéry remained in a state of dearth, subdued and fearful, while gold medals commissioned in honour of the governor were sent to France),[59] although he evidently admires Bertrand François Mahé de la Bourdonnais, a governor of the Ile de France, who served in India and who was imprisoned in the Bastille after being persecuted by Dupleix.[60] Viewing the story of the French in India as a series of petty squabbles among Compagnie representatives, his assessment does not interrogate the extent of what the French had lost on the subcontinent; its salient feature, rather, is resignation to British superiority: 'Il [le sort de l'Inde] intéresse encore plus les Anglais, puisqu'ils se sont exposés à des calamités pareilles, et que leur courage a été secondé de la fortune' (It [the fate of India] still interests the English because, even though they have been exposed to similar calamities, their courage has been assisted by good fortune).[61]

Elsewhere in his writings on India, Voltaire propounds a quite different view of Dupleix. In his *Précis du siècle de Louis XV* (1763), he provides an account of Clive's success in Bengal, contending that it was Dupleix's system of 'nababisme' which allowed the British East India Company to establish itself in Bengal and subsequently throughout India:

> par là qu'il [Clive] commença sa glorieuse carrière, qui a valu depuis à la compagnie anglaise presque tout le Bengale. Il acquit et conserva la grandeur et les richesses que Dupleix avait entrevues.
>
> (from there he [Clive] began his glorious career, which has since brought to the English company nearly all of Bengal. He acquired and held on to the greatness and riches that Dupleix had half seen.)[62]

Although eighteenth-century commentators were not unanimous in their praise of Dupleix, he was portrayed in French historiography of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (and particularly under the Third Republic) as a founding figure of French colonialism.[63] Such adulation was not confined to French writers. Thomas Macaulay, for example, credited Dupleix with the creation of the system that enabled European sovereignty in India: 'the arts both of war and policy, which a few years later were employed with such signal success by the English, were first understood and practised by this ingenious and aspiring Frenchman'.[64]

Abbé Roubaud, in his *Le Politique Indien* (1768), similarly posited British success as the result of French genius, praising both Mahé de La Bourdonnais and Dupleix:

> Dans toutes ces conjectures, les Anglois ont dû leur salut à leurs ennemies, ils leur doivent leur agrandissement & leur gloire. Après avoir profité des grandes vues de M. de la Bourdonnais, ils ont embrassé le vaste système de M. Dupleix: ce qu'ils ont exécuté dans le Bengale, M. Dupleix l'avoit entrepris sur la côte de Coromandel, & il l'eût exécuté sur toutes les côtes de l'Indoustan.
>
> (In all these speculations, the English owed their salvation to their enemies, they owe them their aggrandizement & their glory. Having benefited from the grand visions of M. de la Bourdonnais, they embraced the vast system of M. Dupleix: what they implemented in Bengal, M. Dupleix had undertaken on the Coromandel coast, & would have implemented on all the coasts of Indoustan.)[65]

This explanation of British success was shared by Frenchmen in India. Jean-Baptiste-Joseph Gentil, resident at the court of Aoude during the 1760s, recalled in his memoirs:

> sachant apprécier le système d'un Français, M. Dupleix, [Angleterre] s'en empara après le rappel impolitique de ce dernier, et le suivit avec cette persévérance qui devait la faire triompher de ses nombreux ennemis, et lui obtenir ce degré de grandeur où nous la voyons aujourd'hui, qui est peut-être aussi pour elle le commencement de sa décadence.
>
> (able to appreciate the system of a Frenchman, M. Dupleix, after the impolitic recall of the latter, [England] seized hold of the system and adhered to it with that perseverance which makes this country triumph over its numerous enemies, and obtain from them that degree of grandeur which we see today, which is perhaps also the beginning of its decadence.)[66]

An ancillary of this French explanation for British success is an idealization of the French *comptoirs* and French-Indian trade before the recall of Dupleix in 1754. In the comte du Blanc's *mémoire* on trade with India (April 1814), he states:

> Le commerce de l'ancienne compagnie avant le Gouvt. de Dupleix, était médiocre, est devenu immense sous sa gestion, a décru après son rappel, et enfin a été détruit lors de la prise de possession et de la destruction de nos établissements en 1761.
>
> (The trade of the former company before Dupleix's governorship, was mediocre, became immense under his management, decreased after his recall to France, and finally was destroyed when our trading posts were seized and ruined in 1761.)[67]

This favourable assessment of Dupleix's governorship was not confined to unpublished reflections in government papers. The historian Michaud, in his popular two-volume account of Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan (1801), similarly alludes to 'les beaux jours du gouvernement de Dupleix' (the good days of Dupleix's governorship).[68]

It is true that Dupleix's system of establishing protectorates in the Deccan impressed British personnel and that, on his recall to France, he left the Compagnie at the head of a vast collection of territories.[69] But there was nothing permanent about the French system of influence. As Marc Vigié demonstrated in 1994, the continuing state of warfare in southern India meant that Dupleix was unable to impose his authority over his vassals, the *subahdar*'s entourage, the rajah of Mysore, the rajah of Tanjore or the Marathas.[70] The legal dispute between Dupleix and the Compagnie was bound to generate adulatory accounts of his career, but the myth of an extensive French empire in India cannot be attributed to this expedient alone.[71] A range of accounts in various genres (discursive histories, political and economic treatises, government *mémoires* and eyewitness reports), written under different regimes from 1768 to 1814 and informed by a variety of agendas, all subscribed to the same myth: under Dupleix, the French had controlled India, but it had been 'lost'. Comfort of sorts could be drawn from the fact that British domination of the subcontinent was in large part thanks to French genius.

Related to the myth of a lost French empire is a fourth form of myth-making: the French as potential liberators of India after 1763.[72] Speculations about French colonial administration as a liberating rather than an oppressive force began in the final years of the Louis XVI's reign, and are closely linked with the ongoing anti-colonial debates of that period. Diderot, for example, writing in the *Histoire philosophique et politique des deux Indes* (3rd edn, 1780), in a chapter entitled 'Principes que doivent suivre les François dans l'Inde, s'ils parviennent à y établir leur considération & leur puissance' (Principles that the French in India

must follow if they want to establish their esteem & their power), counselled the French to adhere to his instructions:

> Alors les François, regardés comme les libérateurs de l'Indostan, sortiront de l'état d'humiliation auquel leur mauvaise conduite les avoit réduits. Ils deviendront l'idole des princes & des peuples de l'Asie, si la révolution qu'ils auront procurée devient pour eux une leçon de modération. Leur commerce sera étendu & florissant, tout le tems qu'ils sauront être justes. Mais cette prospérité finiroit par des catastrophes, si une ambition démesurée les poussoit à piller, à ravager, à opprimer.
>
> (And so the French, viewed as the liberators of Indostan, will leave behind the state of humiliation to which their unfortunate behaviour has reduced them. They will become the idols of the princes & the peoples of Asia, if the revolution that they procure becomes for them a lesson in moderation. Their commerce will be widespread & flourishing, and all the time they will know to be just. But this prosperity will end in catastrophe, if untempered ambition incites them to pillage, to rampage and to oppress.)[73]

Fantin-Desodoards, in his historical account of Tipu Sultan and the state of Mysore, presented a similar hypothesis in 1796, contending that, if the French had succeeded in routing the British in India during the America War of Independence:

> Non-seulement les Français, regardés comme les libérateurs de l'Indostan, auraient acquis une gloire immortelle, mais les plus vastes et les plus lucratives possessions territoriales devaient être le prix de leurs efforts.
>
> (Not only would the French, regarded as the liberators of Hindustan, have acquired immortal glory, but the most vast and most lucrative territorial possessions would have been the reward for their efforts.)[74]

Fantin-Desodoards's history has been dismissed by twentieth-century historians as pure fantasy,[75] but his speculations were congruent with reports coming out of India. Personnel in the *comptoirs* were suggesting that the Indian princes viewed the French as a liberating force. Lescalier, Député de la Constituante (Assembly) in Pondichéry, writing to the Ministère de la Marine in 1794, asserted that:

> ceux mêmes [des principaux souverains de l'Inde] qui sont les plus directement dans l'amitié apparente des Anglais, penchent pour les Français; qu'ils supportent avec impatience le joug de la Compagnie anglaise et des ses agents, dont les exactions sont portées au comble. Je sais qu'il ne faudrait que l'apparition d'une escadre française avec une force de terre respectable, pour faire accourir sous nos drapeaux tous les chefs des nations indiennes pour nous demander notre protection et notre alliance.
>
> (even those [of the principal sovereigns of India] who are on the most direct and open terms of friendship with the English, incline towards the French; they are impatient that the yoke of the English Company and its agents be lifted, the exactions of which have reached extreme proportions. I know that it would take only the appearance of a

> French fleet with a respectable land force, to make all the chiefs of the Indian nations rush to our flag in order to ask for our protection and our alliance.)[76]

The French may have lost territorial control on the subcontinent but they had not lost Indian goodwill. In a 1798 *mémoire*, François Montigny, the commander of Chandernagor, advised the Directoire to capture Bombay as part of a plan to expel the English from Malabar, for 'Les motifs qui inspireront notre action feront tomber toutes sortes d'obstacles, parce que les princes nous regarderont alors comme leurs libérateurs' (The motives which will inspire our action will cause all sorts of obstacles to fall away, because the princes will regard us as their liberators).[77] According to such representations, the territorial consequences of 1763 had created a new relationship between India and France: one of friendship. The first *mémoire* (7 April 1814) written by the comte du Blanc to the new government of the Restoration stressed the cordiality of this relationship: 'le nom Français beaucoup plus aimé que le leur [le nom des Anglais]' (the name of the French is much more loved than theirs [the name of the English]).[78] Both in the *métropole* and among French personnel in India, this myth was employed to encourage interventionist actions – regardless of the regime in power, from the final years of Louis XVI's reign to the end of the Napoleonic Wars.

As a consequence, the physical remnants of French power on the subcontinent, the five *comptoirs* which were restored to France under the first Treaty of Paris of 1814,[79] assumed an important role: they became, for metropolitan commentators, a 'lieu de mémoire' of what French rule in India *might* have been.[80] The comte du Blanc's *mémoire* of April 1814, considering France's overseas commerce and possessions, offers a nostalgic description of the *comptoirs*: the *chef-lieu*, Pondichéry, for example, 'naguère si florissante qui dictait la loi aux princes de l'Inde est aujourd'hui dans une misère extrême' (formerly so flourishing, which dictated the law to the princes of India, is today in extreme misery).[81] The situation in Pondichéry in 1814 was indeed desperate,[82] but the exaggerated description of France's former influence (dictating to all the princes in India) is included uncritically. The town of Pondichéry remained an icon for those who maintained a mythologized notion of a lost French Indian empire.

Eighteenth-century myths of the French adventure in India had a peculiar longevity. In the debates in the Senate on the ratification of the Treaty of Cession, which finally restored the five French trading posts to an independent India in 1962, senator Jacques Baumel eulogized the *comptoirs* as 'ces derniers vestiges [de l'empire de Lally et de Dupleix]' (these final vestiges [of the empire of Lally and of Dupleix]) – in other words, the living remains of a lost eighteenth-century French empire.[83]

5 HISTORICAL INDIA: NARRATIVES OF THE PAST

The popularity of historical writing in the eighteenth century has long been an *idée reçue* in the academic study of pre-revolutionary France.[1] Given the fashion for texts which posited themselves as 'histories', it should come as no surprise that India lent itself to such a mode of representation. Alongside a fascination with history was a growing interest in the wider world. Indeed, the proliferation of texts produced at the end of the eighteenth century on India and, more generally, Asia – texts which posit themselves as 'histories', and purport to favour fact over fantasy, analysis over fictionalization – are symptomatic of what Mita Choudhury, discussing contemporaneous English-language representations, has described as the 'demand for more of the *real* Orient'.[2] The general introduction to abbé de Raynal's *Histoire philosophique et politique du commerce et des établissements des Européens dans les deux Indes*, first published in 1770 and estimated to have been one of the three most widely read books in France in the years leading up to the Revolution of 1789 (along with Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Heloïse* and Voltaire's *Candide*),[3] exemplifies this interest in the real, an interest which was shared by the reading public and authors alike:

> J'ai interrogé les vivants et les morts: les vivants, dont la voix se fait entendre à mes côtés; les morts, qui nous ont transmis leurs opinions et leurs connaissances, en quelque langue qu'ils aient écrit. J'ai pesé leur autorité; j'ai opposé leurs témoignages; j'ai éclairci les faits.
>
> (I have interrogated the living and the dead: the living, whose voices can be heard by my sides; the dead, who have conveyed their opinions and their knowledge to us in whatever language they wrote in. I have weighed up their authority; I have compared their eyewitness accounts; I have illuminated the facts.)[4]

Despite the increasing interest in India and the Orient, knowledge of India's physical situation remained vague. The eighteenth-century American traveller John Ledyard developed the term 'Philosophic Geography' to describe his 'freely constructed geographic sentiment', which bore little relation to physical topography and borders.[5] Writers who in the eighteenth century wrote the history of

India combined philosophic geography with a similarly 'philosophic' approach to history.[6] With the development of 'historicism' in the nineteenth century, the movement which Ranke is often credited with having founded,[7] the type of 'history' written in the eighteenth century was largely discredited. Although objective knowledge about India increased throughout the eighteenth century,[8] the ways in which India and its peoples were historicized reveal an increasing French preoccupation with a global past and, particularly after 1763, an exploitation of this history as a means of examining French 'colonial' and 'civilizing' identities. By considering historical accounts, which profess to separate 'truth' from fiction, alongside those which consciously mediate the past according to the aesthetic requirements of literature, this chapter will demonstrate how the image of India was constructed by recurring strategies: ventriloquism, the rhetoric of authenticity, and epistemological occupation.

Ancient India

Curiously, with the exception of Sylvia Murr, twentieth- and twenty-first-century historians have tended to overlook a central characteristic of numerous introductions to the subject of India, be they travelogues, historical accounts or encyclopaedic entries: the desire to define India both geographically and temporally. In her chapter 'Les conditions d'émergence du discours sur l'Inde au Siècle des Lumières', Murr investigates the ways in which three axes of 'Indian' discourse – the Jesuits, the *Académiciens* and the *philosophes* – approached three fundamental problems: the relative age of Indian civilization (in other words, its chronology), the origin of Indians, and their 'primitive monotheism'.[9] Focusing on the period between 1700 and 1782, her analysis of the *mémoires* of the Académie Royale des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres explores the entry of Indian history, as a distinct subject of enquiry, into the Académie after the presentation of Fréret's *mémoire*, 'Recherches sur les Traditions Religieuses et Philosophiques des Indes pour servir de préliminaire à l'examen de le chronologie' (Research into the Religious and Philosophical Traditions of India which serve as a Preliminary Examination of their Chronology) in 1744.[10] Fréret's argument concludes that the origins of Indian civilization are to be found after the Flood (and, therefore, Indians are descended from one of Noah's offspring). While Murr's study does consider the ways in which India was used in the conflict between the Christian vision of the world (upheld by the *Académiciens* and the Jesuit missionaries in India[11]) and a secular history of the world (a vocal proponent of which was Voltaire), her study is limited by its periodization and by the corpus which it uses. She asserts that by the time of the publication of Raynal's *Histoire des deux Indes*, 'les questions de chronologie sacrée qui avaient tant passionné savants, apologistes et philosophes au début du siècle, commençaient à être périmées'

(the questions of the holy chronology, which, at the beginning of the century, had so exercised scholars, Christian apologists and philosophers, were starting to become outdated),[12] but it does not necessarily follow that a single ancient history of India had become established and uncontested. Certainly, the assumed longevity of India's civilization appears with such frequency that it seems to function as a dead trope: a fact that is viewed as axiomatic and hence passes unnoticed. Whereas the antiquity of India had become self-evident over the course of the eighteenth century, and Bossuet's classical schema of the world as laid out in his *Discours sur l'histoire universelle* (1681) was gradually modified and challenged,[13] the history of the era before the arrival of European traders in India remained a shifting discursive space, open to appropriation.

In Fréret's *mémoire* of 1744 he claimed that the histories of the Indian peoples, the Egyptians, the Chinese and the Chaldéens were the only ones outside Europe with sufficient unity to merit study.[14] With such an assertion, 'Indian history' entered the Académie as a subject in its own right, no longer subordinated to the metanarrative of Greek history. If the Académie, however, became interested in exploring the history of India independently from that of the classical world, more popular writers were keen to yoke 'India' to ancient Greece. Jaucourt's article entitled 'L'Inde' (India) in the *Encyclopédie ou dictionnaire raisonné* (1751–80) makes this link explicit. After stating that it was the ancient Greeks who had first named India, the article temporally grounds India with reference to Greece and Egypt and deems it more ancient:

> Les Sciences étoient peut-être plus anciennes dans l'*Inde* que dans l'Egypte; le terrein des *Indes* est bien plus beau, plus heureux, que le terrein voisin du Nil; le sol qui d'ailleurs y est d'une fertilité bien plus variée, a dû exciter davantage la curiosité & l'industrie. Les Grecs y voyagerent avant Alexandre pour y chercher la science. C'est-là que Pythagore puisa son système de métempsycose.
>
> (Sciences are perhaps more ancient in India than they are in Egypt; the land of the Indies is certainly more beautiful, more fortunate, than the land surrounding the Nile; moreover, the earth there is of more varied fertility, and must have stimulated both curiosity and industry. The Greeks travelled there before Alexander to look for science. It is from there that Pythagoras got his inspiration for his system of the transmigration of souls.)[15]

In contrast with the prevailing beliefs which humanist scholarship had espoused during the European 'Renaissance', India is put forward as the original source of scientific knowledge.

Jaucourt's representation of India's past, and particularly of its chronological development, has a great deal in common, both stylistically and epistemologically, with that created by Voltaire. In his *Fragments sur quelques révolutions dans l'Inde* (1773), for example, Voltaire states:

> C'est d'abord une remarque très importante que Pythagore alla de Samos au Gange pour apprendre la géométrie, il y a environ deux mille cinq cents ans au moins, et plus de sept cents ans avant notre ère vulgaire, si récemment adoptée par nous. Or, certainement Pythagore n'aurait pas entrepris un si étrange voyage, si la réputation de la science des brachmanes n'avait été déjà longtemps établie de proche en proche en Europe, et si plusieurs voyageurs n'avaient déjà enseigné la route.
>
> (It is first of all very important to remark that Pythagoras travelled from Samos to the Ganges in order to learn geometry, at least approximately two thousand five hundred years ago, and more than seven hundred years before the common era so recently adopted by us. Needless to say, Pythagoras certainly would not have undertaken such a strange journey if the Brachmanes' reputation in the sciences had not already been gradually established in Europe and if several travellers had not already identified the route.)[16]

In all his writings on India, including his *Essai sur les mœurs et l'esprit des nations* (first published in 1756) and his *Dictionnaire philosophique* (1764), Voltaire challenged Judeo-Christian chronology by arguing that the Indians were the first people in the world. In the 1765 and later editions of his *Essai sur les mœurs*, the 'Avant-propos' is explicit in its questioning of such a chronology and Bossuet's conception of it:

> Il eût été à souhaiter qu'il [Bossuet] n'eût pas oublié entièrement les anciens peuples de l'Orient, comme les Indiens et les Chinois qui ont été si considérables avant que les autres nations fussent formées.
>
> (It was to be wished that he [Bossuet] had not forgotten entirely the ancient peoples of the Orient, like the Indians and the Chinese, who had been of a great size before the other nations were formed.)[17]

In the case of the *Fragments sur quelques révolutions dans l'Inde*, his attack on the Jesuitical dominance of Indian history is lent additional force by his use of English sources, such as Holwell's *Interesting Historical Events, Relative to the Province of Bengal, and the Empire of Indostan* (1766), which claimed to have consulted the 'annales des bracmanes' (the Brachmanes' annals) and thus eschewed the Jesuitical agenda.[18]

The exploitation of the Indian past by two opposing polemical traditions during the eighteenth century is a central tenet of Murr's argument. Her claim that 'India' functioned merely as a 'pretext' in the wider movement from a mythical, creationalist interpretation of history to a secularist one is, however, somewhat reductive.[19] Along with writing on the origins of the peoples inhabiting America, and the writing of Chinese history,[20] representing the past of the peoples of India did necessitate some renegotiation of biblical historicity, precipitating the divide between proponents of a philosophical approach to history (exemplified by Voltaire and the *encyclopédistes*) and a Christian methodology (of which père Cœurdoux's dialectic of 1777 is paradigmatic).[21] The origins of India form part

of this wider debate, but it is erroneous to classify India's antiquity as a mere adjunct of philosophical and theological concerns. Nor is it accurate to see the failure of abbé Raynal to adopt a stance on the origins of India as evidence of growing disinterest, among both authors and the reading public, in the problem of the relative age of the civilization.[22] Rather, the frequency with which the ancient history of Indian civilization was being adduced by the 1780s shows that India's antiquity had become a necessary marker of its image.

The belief in India as the primitive source of all civilization is apparent in numerous texts, even those which eschew the ideological rationale adopted by the *philosophes*. The anonymous *mémoire*, *Etat Actuel de l'Inde* (1787), written by a shareholder in the new East Indian trading company to argue for increased French trade with India, opens its survey of the present state of the subcontinent by affirming the antiquity of Indian society, although the use of the modifying adverb 'peut-être' (perhaps) suggests an unwillingness to antagonize either side of the philosophical debate on the exact age of its civilization:

> L'Inde est peut-être la contrée de la terre qui a été la premiere policée. Sa fertilité, l'industrie de ses habitans, & leurs principes religieux, ont contribué également à la peupler. Les mœurs des Indous n'ont point changé; on les trouve telles qu'elles sont décrites dans la vie d'Alexandre.
>
> (India is perhaps the first country on the earth to have been civilized. Its fertility, the industry of its inhabitants, and their religious principles, equally contributed to its growing population. The mores of the Hindoos have not at all changed; they are such as they were described during the life of Alexander.)[23]

The former soldier Alexandre Legoux de Flaix begins the preliminary discourse to his 'Tableau historique' (Historical panorama) in his *Essai historique, géographique et politique sur l'Indoustan* (1807) with an assertion of chronology which echoes that of Voltaire and the *Encyclopédie*:

> Tous les monuments historiques des Indous, ainsi que ceux des Egyptiens et des Grecs, attestent que les mages et les philosophes de ces derniers pays moins avantagés par la nature, et plus nouvellement peuplés, se rendaient dans l'Indoustan, primitivement nommé Bâarkande, pour y puiser les principes de la philosophie, de la morale, de la civilisation, des sciences et des arts que ses habitants cultivaient depuis une longue série de siècles et qui étaient presque ignorés alors du reste de la terre.
>
> (All the Hindoos' historical monuments, as well as those of the Egyptians and the Greeks, prove that the magi and the philosophers of these last two countries, with fewer natural advantages and more recently peopled, went to Hindustan, of which the primitive name was Bâarkande, to obtain the principles of philosophy, morality, civilization, the sciences and the arts that the inhabitants had been cultivating over a centuries-long period and which were practically unknown by the rest of the world.)[24]

The inclusion of a chronology which posits Indian civilization as older than that of either Egypt or Greece is consistent with the residual influence of philosophical discourses immediately after the Revolution. Nevertheless, while Legoux de Flaix adopts a secular chronology, the rhetoric of his historical overview is the antithesis of a Voltairean attack on the Judeo-Christian schematization of world history:

> les premiers Indous trouvèrent moins d'obstacles que les peuples qui habitent des contrées moins heureuses, pour parvenir au bonheur social et connaître promptement les principes de la civilisation gravés dans le cœur des hommes par la providence elle-même; aussi sont-ils encore, de l'aveu de tous les voyageurs éclairs, le peuple chez lequel on découvre les plus anciennes traces des effets de la perfectabilité humaine, de l'origine des sciences et des bienfaits de la vie sociale.
>
> (the first Hindoos found fewer obstacles than those peoples who inhabit less fortunate countries to reaching social happiness and to getting to know promptly the principles of civilization which are engraved in men's hearts by providence itself; thus they still are, according to the testimonies of all enlightened travellers, the people in whom the most ancient traces of the perfection of man can be found, along with the origin of the sciences and the benefits of a civilized society.)[25]

The employment of biblical language ('providence'), and the linking of Indian society with prelapsarian humanity, posits Indians as a people in whom the traces of original sin are absent.[26] By affirming in the same sentence the longevity of Indian civilization and the providential rule according to which all the world is governed, Legoux de Flaix shows how, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, both the antiquity of Indian society and a Christian chronology of the world could be juxtaposed without any apparent dissonance.

Like their British counterparts, French authors displayed a belief in the unchanging nature of Indian society, and this appears in a range of texts.[27] For example, the above-cited observation from the anonymous shareholder in the Compagnie des Indes maintains that the mores of the Indian people are exactly the same as when they were described in Alexander's time.[28] In the preliminary discourse which the oriental scholar Langlès appended to a collection of newly translated Hindu tales published in 1790, the unchanging character of Indian (and especially Hindu) society is affirmed as an incontestable fact:

> Ce portrait convient également aux Indiens anciens et modernes, parce que ce peuple, immuable au milieux des grandes révolutions qui ont changé son sort et la face de son pays, a conservé, malgré les persécutions et les vexations de ses conquérans, la religion, les mœurs, les usages de ses ancêtres; et son caractere national est invariablement resté le même. Les cruautés inouies dont il a été si fréquemment le témoin et la victime, n'ont pu altérer sa douceur naturelle.
>
> (This portrait is equally accurate for modern as it is for ancient Indians, because this people, immovable in the middle of the great revolutions which have changed the fate

> and the aspect of its country, has preserved, despite persecutions and humiliations by its conquerors, the religion, the mores and the customs of its ancestors; and its national character has invariably stayed the same. The unheard-of cruelties of which it has frequently been both witness and victim have done nothing to alter its natural goodwill.)[29]

Mme La Chnsse de Polier, in the publication of her brother Antoine Polier's manuscripts on Hindu mythology, similarly stresses the static nature of Hindu society and mores:

> Doux, patiens, hospitaliers, bienveillans envers l'homme et les animaux, les Indous ont conservés leur régime végétal, leurs divisions primitives en quatre castes, la prééminence de celle des Bramines sur toutes les autres … et grand nombre d'autres usages, qui du tems des Grecs remontaient déjà à la plus haute antiquité; et cette ressemblance des Indous modernes avec les anciens, certifiée, par tous les voyageurs instruits, ne peut être attribuée à leur isolement des nations étrangères.
>
> (Gentle, patient, hospitable, benevolent towards men and animals, the Hindoos have conserved their vegetarian diet, the primitive divisions into four castes, the pre-eminence of the Brahmin caste over all the others … and a great number of other customs, which in the time of the Greeks already dated far back into antiquity; and this resemblance of modern Hindoos with ancient forbears, which is testified by all educated travellers, can be attributed only to their isolation from other nations.)[30]

Yet, if the tendency to emphasize the belief in the unvarying mores of India was a constant across the period, there was a divergence in the ways in which Indian history was written and exploited.

Two factors contributed to the development of writing Indian history: the influence of Voltaire, and a new reliance on 'authentic' Indian sources. The intellectual stature of Voltaire was such that, for many writers on India, he was effectively seen as a primary source. Voltaire's interpretation of the Indian past is directly referenced as irrefutable, both by Langlès and in the anonymous account of the visit by Tipu Sultan's ambassadors to France published in 1788.[31] These two accounts rehearse the same tendentious arguments as Voltaire about the chronology of the world, and display a similar reliance on dubious sources (notably Holwell and Dow).[32] As literary critics and historians have argued, Voltaire's construction of India was subordinated to his theological and philosophical agendas: it became a 'weapon' to be deployed against *l'infâme* (superstition, intolerance).[33] The afterlife of this image, however, and the intertextual cross-references which it generated, demonstrate how far an understanding of Indian history among the French reading public was informed by a specific philosophical interpretation of the subcontinent.

Although Voltaire's influence should not be underestimated, there was simultaneously a growing interest in using Eastern sources in order to narrate Indian history. Voltaire himself was passionate about discovering authentic Indian texts

(although he was frequently duped),[34] but it was Anquetil Duperron's *Zend-Avesta* (first published in 1771), with its consultation of previously neglected texts, that was revolutionary not only in France but also in Britain.[35] While they may not have benefited from the kind of extensive scholarship carried out by Anquetil Duperron, other texts displayed a similar eschewal of Eurocentrism. Raynal's *Histoire des deux Indes* (1770), for example, argues that it is only by consulting Indian texts that the European can truly understand Hindu culture. Discussing the rite of *sati*, it observes that such a custom remained inexplicable until European readers had access to Hindu civil legislature, which revealed that a widow was condemned to an impoverished life if she did not die with her husband: 'On a ignoré sur quelle base pouvoit être fondée cette institution, jusqu'à ce que le code civil de l'Indostan traduit du samskret, soit venu fixer sur ce point nos opinions' (We remained ignorant of the basis upon which such an institution was based until the civil code of Hindustan was translated from Sanskrit and thus allowed us to form our opinions properly).[36]

This divergence of methodologies notwithstanding, historical representations reveal a development in how India's past was narrated over the course of the period and, more specifically, how it was emplotted. Prior to 1789 there is evidence of a belief in the superiority of French history, and Indian history is emplotted as subordinate to this narratorial agenda. In the *Etat Actuel de l'Inde* of 1787, the anonymous author presents Indian history as being in a constant state of flux (the inevitable consequence of despotism), tacitly contrasting it with the stability of French history:

> L'histoire de l'Inde, comme celle de tous les pays soumis au joug du despotisme, ne présente qu'un tissu de révolutions rapides, où l'on voit une foule de souverainetés s'élever & s'anéantir.
>
> (The history of India, like that of all countries under the yoke of despotism, presents only a tapestry of rapid revolutions where a crowd of sovereignties can be seen to rise and fall.)[37]

After 1789, there is increasing evidence of India's past being used not in the theological and philosophical debate about approaches to history, but rather as an exemplar adduced in evaluations of revolution. Volney, in his *Les Ruines, ou méditation sur les révolutions des empires* (1791), which assesses former revolutions and fallen societies, adduces Indian history, in conjunction with that of China and of the Tartars, to explore the reasons for social collapse. He posits the passive nature of Hinduism as the principal reason for India's vulnerability to revolution and invasion: 'L'Indien, accablé de préjugés, enchaîné par les liens sacrés de ses castes, végète dans une apathie incurable' (The Indian, overcome with prejudices, enslaved by the sacred divisions of his castes, vegetates in an incurable apathy).[38] Indian history is also deployed in Michaud's *Histoire des progrès et de*

la chute de l'empire de Mysore sous les règnes d'Hyder-Aly et Tippoo-Saïb (1801) to serve as a caution against conquest:

> C'est sur les débris de l'empire de l'Indoustan, que les peuples ont dû apprendre à déplorer la gloire des conquérants. Tant de provinces dévastées par l'anarchie, disputées par la guerre, envahies par des usurpateurs, doivent offrir ainsi une leçon terrible aux chefs des nations qui veulent conquérir plus de pays qu'ils n'en peuvent gouverner.
>
> (It is faced with the ruins of Hindustan that people must learn to deplore the glory of conquerors. So many provinces devastated by anarchy, disputed by war, invaded by usurpers, must offer a terrible lesson to leaders of nations who want to conquer more countries than they can possibly govern.)[39]

In light of Michaud's anti-Napoleonic stance, this interpretation of Indian history, relying upon the devastation by conquest of a utopian society, may be seen be seen as a warning against French expansionist ventures. The continuing digression, juxtaposing 'modern' empires with 'ancient' empires is, however, indubitably an invective against the British in India:

> Les peuples anciens avaient de l'ambition; les modernes n'ont que de l'avarice ... La plupart des guerres qui se sont faites dans notre siècle, ont eu pour objet les avantages du commerce.*
>
> * La guerre d'Amérique, tant célébrée par nos philosophes, qui ne lui voyaient d'autre motif que la liberté des Etats-Unis, n'a véritablement eu pour cause que le privilège exclusif qui voulaient s'arroger les Anglais, de fournir du thé à leurs colons, et le grand intérêt qui avait la France de priver l'Angleterre d'une colonie, dont la commerce de la Tamise pouvait s'enrichir.
>
> (The people of ancient times had ambition; modern people have only avarice ... The majority of the wars which have taken place in our century have had only the aim of increasing trade.*
>
> * The war in America, so celebrated by our philosophers, who saw in it no other reason than the liberty of the United States, really had as its motivating factor the exclusive privilege, which the English wished to arrogate to themselves, of providing tea to their colonial subjects, and France's great interest of depriving England of a colony from which the Thames could enhance its trade.)[40]

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the antiquity of Indian civilization had become a given, a linguistic marker which conveyed the essence of India to French readers. It was also a polyvalent symbol to be exploited in more politically contingent debates. As will be shown in the following section on French writing of eighteenth-century Indian history, Michaud's ostensible consideration of the antiquity of Indian society was, in reality, a means of reflecting on French history in relation to the dominant power in India, Britain.

Narrating Eighteenth-Century Indian History

France was at war for almost three of the six decades between the outbreak of the Seven Years War and the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815.[41] During the second half of the eighteenth century, conflict with Britain, and growing Anglophobia at court, saw the gradual replacement of France's natural enemy, Austria, by perfidious Albion.[42] If, as François Furet observes, the French 'like other European peoples, and perhaps *par excellence* among them … were accustomed to define themselves in relation to an enemy',[43] India, which constituted a nexus of trade and financial interests, in addition to being the locus of economic rivalry with Britain, provided the ideal geographic setting to explore competing European identities, while changing political fortunes and rapid regime change encouraged a reflective approach to the recent past.

The tendency towards historicization in French texts which represented India was both explicit and implicit. In Lemierre's 1770 tragedy *La Veuve du Malabar ou l'Empire des coutumes*, the influence of the past on the representation of India is implied. The play, which was first performed in 1770 and successfully revived in 1780 before being translated into English and staged in London,[44] is set in the geographically ambiguous location of 'Malabar'. While the French did have a *comptoir* on the Malabar coast (Mahé), the scene is simply situated in an anonymous 'ville maritime, sur la côte de Malabar' (maritime town on the Malabar coast).[45] The temporal setting of the play is similarly imprecise.[46] This notwithstanding, there are small linguistic markers which suggest a temporal situation during the Seven Years War (1756–63) and, despite the chronological vagueness, the play provides a telling example of how a historicizing discourse could be employed.

Lemierre's play is a quintessential example of what Fludernik calls the 'Suttee Romance', where, in the best chivalric tradition, the male French 'knight' rescues the poor female victim from her cruel fate on the funeral pyre.[47] Lanassa (*la veuve du Malabar*) is due to become a *sati* under the encouragement of the 'Grand bramine'. Although the 'jeune bramine' (who, it transpires in Act II, scene iii, is the widow's long-lost brother) is horrified by the prospect of such an act, he proves powerless to prevent it. The besieging French rescue the widow, who is revealed to have been the general's long-lost Indian love, and peace is restored under the bountiful and beneficial rule of Louis XV.

Reports of warring Europeans occur early in the play, with the 'jeune bramine' announcing at the beginning of Act I, scene ii, that:

> les Européens accourus vers nos ports
> De leurs vaisseaux nombreux investissent ces bords,
> Tant de foudres lancés sur les murs de la ville;
> De leurs coups redoublés ébranlent notre asile;

Et c'est peu qu'aujourd'hui la guerre et ses fureurs
Fassent de ce rivage un théâtre d'horreurs!

(having rushed towards our ports the Europeans
From their numerous vessels lay siege to these shores,
[And] hurl so much wrath against the walls of the town;
With their increased attacks they are shaking our shelter;
And it will not now be long before war and its fury
Make of this coast a theatre of horrors!)[48]

Throughout the Seven Years War, British and French forces disputed coastal towns in southern India as European rivalries were played out on the subcontinent. It is plausible, therefore, that such reported action could have evoked for the late eighteenth-century audience the events of the Seven Years War, or even earlier, when Dupleix was building up his power base around Pondichéry (1742–54).[49] Whether or not Lemierre is deliberately historicizing the recent French past in India, the ending has strong political implications. The civilizing influence of the French in India is a motif throughout the play; indeed, the humanitarian role of France appears to precede the arrival of its military forces. Fatime, Lanassa's maid, reassures the widow that with the French in the town she will not be forced to perform *sati*: 'Vous n'en pouvez douter, madame, vous vivrez / Du moment qu'aux Français ces murs seront livrés' (You cannot doubt it, madame, you will live / From the moment that the French deliver these walls).[50] Moreover, the French characters (the general and an officer) discuss their objectives in India in explicitly mercantilist terms which stress the civilizing power of commerce:[51]

Je les ai rassurés: ils ont su que mon roi,
En m'envoyant vers eux, n'exige que leur foi,
Qu'il n'est rien dans leurs lois qu'il veuille qu'on renverse;
Qu'il ne veut seulement, pour les soins du commerce,
Qu'un port, où ses vaisseaux parties pour l'Indostan
Puissent se reposer sur le vaste Océan.

(I have reassured them: they know that my king,
In sending me to them, is asking only for their trust,
That there is nothing in their laws which he wishes to overthrow;
That he wants only, for the protection of his trade,
A port where his Hindustan-bound vessels
Can berth in the vast Indian Ocean.)[52]

But the play does not juxtapose the superior civilizing French exclusively with barbarous Indians. The French are similarly defined with reference to other trading powers in India. In the general's closing speech, which constitutes the last lines of the play, order is restored under the rule of the king, as is reflected linguistically by the syllabic balance of the final alexandrines, with the French

humanitarian order counterpointed against the anonymous victorious others ('D'autres'), who, with conquest, bring only cruelty, pride and violence:[53]

> Partage, après tout notre effroi,
> Tant de reconnaissance entre ton frère et moi.
> Vous, peuples, respirez sous de meilleurs auspices;
> Des faveurs de mon roi recevez pour prémices
> L'entière extinction d'un usage inhumain.
> Louis, pour l'abolir, s'est servi de ma main.
> En se montrant sensible autant qu'il est né juste,
> La splendeur de son règne devient plus august.
> D'autres chez les vaincus portent la cruauté,
> L'orgueil, la violence; et lui, l'humanité.
>
> (After all this fear, divide your great thanks
> between your brother and I.
> You, people, are living under the best auspices;
> Receive the favours of my king as the beginnings
> Of the entire extinction of an inhuman custom.
> Louis, to abolish it, has used my hand.
> And showing himself as sensitive as he was born just,
> The splendour of his reign becomes more august.
> While others, to the defeated, bring cruelty,
> Pride and violence; he brings humanity.)[54]

If *La Veuve du Malabar* should be viewed as a historical play, it must also be read as a counterfactual one which provides a fictional dramatization of what French rule in India would have been like, in contrast with the actual political domination of India by the British and the East India Company. More than a simple act of political appropriation, Lemierre's dramatic representation of India's recent past reveals how knowledge of India was mediated in order to create history from a French perspective, a perspective that relied intrinsically upon the representation of European competitors.[55]

In Voltaire's *Fragments sur quelques révolutions dans l'Inde*, the past which is represented is considerably less ambiguous. The text was unashamedly a piece of propaganda designed to rehabilitate the memory of Lally, who had become the scapegoat for France's defeats in India during the Seven Years War and who was executed in 1766 after his return to France. Written in catastrophic terms, the text, subdivided into 'articles' or chapters, anticipates the inevitable end of Lally, with the article titles presaging the action. Article 14, for example, is entitled 'Le comte de Lally prend Arcate, assiége Madras. Commencement de ses Malheurs' (The comte de Lally takes Arcate and lays siege to Madras. The beginning of his misfortunes).[56] These descriptive titles, and the self-fulfilling nature of the narrative, relate Voltaire's historical writing stylistically to that of his *contes philosophiques*.[57] The foreshadowing of Lally's fate, and the fate of France in India,

inscribes the narrative within a fatalistic schema. Ultimately, Voltaire concludes that chance alone is the reason for the success of *la perfide Albion* in India.[58]

The events related in Voltaire's 'Fragments' are emplotted so that they appear to be taking place simultaneously with the act of narration:

> Tandis que les deux généraux Lally et d'Aché voguent vers le lieu de leur destination, il est nécessaire de faire connaître aux lecteurs qui veulent s'instruire, l'état de l'Inde dans cette conjecture, et quelles étaient les possessions des nations de l'Europe dans ces contrées.
>
> (While the two generals Lally and d'Aché are sailing towards the place of their destination, it is necessary to make the readers aware, should they wish to instruct themselves, of the state of India at this time and what the European possessions were in these countries.)[59]

Voltaire's conflation of 'past' and 'present' is a factor in the assessment by some critics that he was unable to deal effectively with historical subject matter.[60] Despite his rhetorical emphasis on 'truth', and his claim to have access to knowledge which was unavailable to other authors, the analysis presented of French losses in India is thin.[61] Detailed descriptions of Lally's actions and the minutiae of the defeat are eschewed in favour of metaphorical apostrophes. The comparison of military defeat with a natural disaster conveniently serves Voltaire's propagandistic agenda of demonstrating Lally's innocence; his culpability is minimized and details are deemed irrelevant:

> Nous ne prétendons pas faire un journal de toutes les minuties du brigandage et détailler les malheurs particuliers qui précèdèrent la prise de Pondichéri [*sic*] et le malheur général. Quand une peste a détruit une peuplade, à quoi bon fatiguer les vivants du récit de tous les symptômes qui ont emporté tant de morts? il suffira de dire que le général Lally se retira dans Pondichéri, et que les Anglais bloquèrent bientôt cette capitale.
>
> (We do not claim to be making a catalogue of all the acts of robbery and detailing all the individual misfortunes which preceded the fall of Pondichéry and the general misfortune. When a plague destroys a people, what good is it to tire the living with an account of all the symptoms which have taken away so many of the living? Suffice to say, General Lally withdrew to Pondichéry, and the English blockaded the capital.)[62]

Although Voltaire famously disparaged travellers' accounts,[63] he shared with the writers of travelogues a rhetorical emphasis on authenticity. Assertions of the authority of the eyewitness – 'a category in ancient rhetoric called "autopsy"', as Pagden points out – are a recurring feature of historical accounts of eighteenth-century India.[64] In the anonymous *Tableau historique de l'Inde* (1771), the author-narrator asserts his credentials for the account, stressing that whatever he lacks in stylistic elegance he compensates for by authenticity:

> C'est, Lecteur, sur ces nations si éloignées de nos climats, que j'entreprends de vous donner quelques détails; je les ferai avec précision; je ne hasarderai rien. Tout ce que je vais parcourir, je l'ai puisé sur les lieux mêmes. La politique, le gouvernement, les mœurs, la religion, formeront autant de sujets intéressans pour l'histoire. Jamais je n'écarterai de la vérité. Pour toutes ces choses, je demande une indulgence nécessaire: un Militaire qui a vécu huit ans aux grandes Indes n'est pas un Ecrivain fort élégant.
>
> (It is, dear reader, on these nations far away from our climes, that I undertake to give you some details. I will do it with precision and chance nothing. All that I am going to cover I have obtained from the places themselves. The politics, the method of government, the mores, the religion, will form the many interesting subjects for this history. But I will not stray from the truth. In everything, I ask the necessary indulgence: a soldier who has lived eight years in the large Indies is not a very elegant writer.)[65]

In addition to the linguistic markers which stress the author-narrator's personal experience of events,[66] the account relies on the rhetorical device of intertexuality. The writer appears as concerned with correcting preceding accounts as he is with transparently recording what he has seen with his own eyes, and Voltaire's representation of the past is his target:

> Dans la somme des récits qui sortent de la plume de M. de Voltaire [*sic*], je ne puis laisser passer ceux qui tiennent de la description & des faits. Cet Auteur prétend que la bataille de Vandavachie se donna dans une Isle, & il n'y en a pas dans cette partie de la Province; d'ailleurs M. de Lally ne resta pas seul sur le champ de bataille, M. de Bussi fut pris long tems encore après sa retraite: l'armée ennemie n'étoit point des Marates, mais 2500 Anglois aux ordres d'un Colonel la composoient: les Marattes n'ont pas un Chef seulement, mais un Roi qui prend le titre de Saha Raja, le grand Roi; enfin il n'est pas électif, mais le trône est transmise à l'héritier mâle.
>
> Tout dans cet Auteur se ressent de sa vive imagination; il augmente d'un seul coup de plume l'Escadre Angloise qui contraignit la nôtre à quitter la côte, de sept vaisseaux; il fait montrer par M. de Leryt une lettre qui ne lui parvint jamais, elle avoit été intercepté par les Anglois.
>
> (In all the stories which have flowed from M. de Voltaire's pen, I cannot allow those which claim to be descriptions and facts to stand. This author claims that the battle of Vandavachie took place on an island, and there is not one in this part of the province; besides, M. de Lally did not remain alone on the field of battle, M. de Bussi was taken captive a long time after Lally's retreat: the enemy army was made up not of Marathas but of 2,500 English soldiers under the orders of a colonel: Marathas do not have only a chief, but a king who adopts the title of Saha Raja, the grand king; finally, he is not elected, but the throne is passed along the male line.
>
> Everything in this author shows evidence of a lively imagination; by a stroke of the pen he makes the English squadron which prevented ours from leaving the coast bigger by seven vessels; he has M. de Leryt disclose a letter that never reached him, as it was intercepted by the English.)[67]

Such competing discourses undoubtedly perpetuate a Eurocentric vision, in which the actual resident of the 'tropical' space, the 'agent of resistance' as Srinivas

Aravamudan dubs him or her, is elided.[68] They also demonstrate that, although the French reading public in the last years of the *ancien régime* had greater access to a range of accounts about India's past, their knowledge was not necessarily better than that of their predecessors. India's past was represented dialectically: rival interpretations occupied the same geographical space and events.

Statistically, between 1763 and 1815, the most important subject to lend itself to a historicizing discourse was that of the sultans of Mysore: Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan. During this period at least four accounts were published and three plays performed in France which dealt with the history of the Indian state of Mysore, and more particularly with the life and death of Tipu Sultan.[69] This prominence is perhaps to be expected in light of the close diplomatic relations between Mysore and France, a relationship that reached its apogee with the arrival of Tipu's embassy to Versailles in 1788. The interest stimulated by these Indian ambassadors should not be underestimated. As the naval minister La Luzerne commented in a letter of 24 August 1788 to the ambassadors' translator: 'Ils ne pouvaient faire un pas que ce ne soit la nouvelle publique' (They cannot take one step outside without it being general gossip).[70] Recent historical research, first by Kate Teltscher and then by Linda Colley, has explored the cultural role that the figures of the sultans of Mysore played in British imaginations, with Colley claiming that Tipu had a currency that was all the more potent because of contemporary associations with Britain's arch-enemy in the 1800s: Napoleon.[71] Maya Jasanoff's 2005 monograph *Edge of Empire* has gone some way to redressing imperial historians' curious neglect of Mysore's long-standing ties with the French. As Jasanoff asserts, it was precisely the close ties of Mysore with Britain's traditional enemy, France, that 'made Haidur and Tipu into such potent figures of villainy'.[72] By examining French-language representations of Tipu Sultan, and analysing how eighteenth-century Indian history is narrated by French writers in this period, it is possible to uncover an alternative history to the victorious British one, which, as Teltscher claims, saw the 'imperial pen [reinscribe] India with greater assurance, and a firmer hand'.[73]

The critic Jackie Assayag labels Étienne de Jouy's Indian tragedy of 1813, *Tippô-Saëb: Tragédie en cinq actes et en vers,* as a 'napoléonienne machine de guerre antibritannique' (Napoleonic anti-British weapon). He adds that 'Aujourd'hui, personne n'est dupe des prétentions historiques de Jouy et de son orientalisme orienté' (Today, nobody is duped by either Jouy's historical pretensions or his biased orientalism).[74] Such an assessment, made with the benefit of hindsight, calls attention to what could be described as Jouy's benevolent colonialism (which appears to represent Indians sympathetically while using discursive strategies associated with colonialism), but it also underplays what Jouy's successful tragedy reveals about the historicizing tendency evident in French-language representations of India.

For Jouy's tragedy of 1813 was not the only dramatization of the events of 1799, which saw the British seizure of Seringapatam and the death of Tipu Sultan. On 16 *thermidor*, year twelve of the Republican calendar (1804), Gobert and Dubois staged their *Tipoo-Saëb, ou la prise de Séringapatam: Mélodrame historique en trois actes, en prose*.[75] Their generic classification of the work as a historical melodrama immediately emphasizes two elements of the story of Tipu Sultan: its dramatic and visual qualities,[76] and the alleged truthfulness of the representation. In their 'Préface', the authors state: 'En annonçant un Mélodrame historique, nous avons crû devoir ne rien altérer des faits consacrés par l'histoire' (In announcing a historical melodrama, we believed that we should not alter in any way facts consecrated by history).[77] A postmodern critic might be tempted to counter this disingenuous claim with arguments about relativism, yet in the present context questions of 'authenticity' are irrelevant; the primary focus here is how the narrative is shaped.

At the outset, the cast list provides evidence of this shaping. Included are identifiable figures from history: Tipoo-Saïb, King of Hindostan; his sons, Kalik and Mooza-Addoen; and British military leaders, including a Milord Stuart (Lieutenant-General Stuart being a veteran of the Third Mysore War and present at the fall of Seringapatam). In addition, characters are listed who do not have equivalent historical personages. The most significant is Adèle, described as a young Frenchwoman and a friend of Jenny (a relative of Milord Stuart), but there are also geographically anomalous theatrical figures such as 'Negros' who would have acted as a dramatic 'shorthand', showing the audience that the play is set in foreign, exotic lands.[78] The inclusion of the geographically misplaced young Frenchwoman allows the historical narrative to be used as a vehicle for contrasting French and British colonial identities.

Like its more famous successor, Jouy's *Tippô-Saëb*, Gobert and Dubois's narrative gives the French a role that could be seen as a timely example of jingoism, the earlier play reflecting the patriotism which flourished at the height of the Napoleonic expansionist adventure in 1804.[79] In this dramatic representation it is Adèle, the young Frenchwoman, who decides that Tipoo's sons should be saved and who instigates their escape. In the opening scene she counsels Jenny to forget the fact that she is destined to be married to the cruel English general, Lord Selmours. Her compassion and maternal instincts towards the children, however, are not posited as being solely governed by gender, but also by nationality. When Jenny agrees that they should be liberated, Adèle advises that Jenny 'Oublie ta naissance, ta patrie, deviens française comme moi' (Forget the place of your birth, your homeland, and become a Frenchwoman like me).[80] French identity is defined according to a civic rather than an ethnic ideal,[81] and Jenny's assessment of Adèle's goodness is as much an evaluation of the French 'character' as it is of her personality. Adèle has taught Jenny self-knowledge and revolu-

tionary universalism in comparison with the selfish narrow-mindedness of her countrymen and, most importantly, given her an ideal to which she can aspire:

> comment ne mourrais-je pas pour égaler leur héroïsme, puisqu'il n'en est pas une qui ne soit prête à sacrifier pour une action généreuse: ç'en est fait, Adèle, j'oublie la tristesse de mon pays, l'égoïsme de mes compatriotes, leur perfidie, leur complôt et leur ambition; enfin, me voilà française, et dussé-je mourir, je sauverai les fils du sultan.
>
> (certainly, would I not die to be equal to their heroism, because there is not one who is not ready to sacrifice himself for a generous action; that's it, Adèle, I will forget the dreariness of my country, the selfishness of my countrymen, their treachery, their machinations and their ambition; here I am at last, a Frenchwoman, and should I die in the attempt, I will save the sultan's children.)[82]

The ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity can be exported, in accordance with Jacobinist proselytizing of 1789; it is in adhering to such beliefs that anyone can become French, an ideal which resonates with the internal colonialism carried out by Napoleon after the Peace of Amiens (1802).[83] Like the political and civilizing ideals implemented under Napoleon,[84] Adèle's rhetoric is ostensibly directed against the exotic barbarism of India; but it is also deployed against the external enemy, the British, who are staged as the antithesis of such qualities.

The femininity of Adèle is similarly important in differentiating French ideals from British ruthlessness. A female figure of liberty, she evokes early republican iconography, and Selmours's reaction to her daring rescue plan signals to the audience that she should be viewed as representative of France itself: 'C'est cette française: à tout ce qu'elle vient de dire je reconnais l'esprit independent et fier de cette nation que j'abhore!' (It's that Frenchwoman: in everything that she has just said I recognize the independent and proud spirit of that nation that I loathe!).[85] Tipoo-Saïb, in contrast, is presented in barely disguised Napoleonic terms. His entry on stage in Act II is presaged by an Indian whose description recalls the image of Napoleon – a fearless statesman, who has all the derring-do of a foot soldier and the tactical knowledge of a general, in addition to being a family man:[86]

> Tipoo-Saïb est un héros que le péril ne peut épouvanter; homme d'état quand la politique l'exige, il a dans le conseil cette raison, cette sagesse, cette prévoyance d'un ministre consommé; guerrier, il montre sur le champ de bataille et la bravoure d'un soldat et la prudence d'un général; dans son palais, au milieu de sa famille, ce n'est plus qu'un sujet accessible à tous les sentimens privés de l'amour et de la nature.
>
> (Tipoo-Saïb is a hero who is afraid of no peril; a statesman when the political situation requires him to be, he has in this position the reason, the wisdom, and the foresight of a consummate minister; a warrior, he shows on the battlefield all the bravura of a foot soldier and all the prudence of a general; in the palace, at the heart of his family, he is like all other individuals, susceptible to all the private sentiments inspired by love and nature.)[87]

The audience is thus invited to identify with the Indian hero, against which the English, the worst of barbarians, are pitted. The Indians have only one real friend, France, a fact borne out by Adèle's actions and the cruel behaviour of the English: Gobert and Dubois, misleadingly, have Tipu's sons held hostage until just before the fall of Seringapatam and in horrific conditions, when in fact Lord Cornwallis detained them between February 1792 and May 1794 and they were the toast of British society in India.[88] In combining the symbolism of French liberty (in Adèle) with the depiction of Tipoo-Saïb as Napoleon, the theatrical representation achieves its political end by associating the French and the Indians and opposing them against the British.

If Jouy's more successful tragedy of 1813 is compared with that of Gobert and Dubois, its jingoism and bias take on a curious resonance. *Tippô-Saëb* was staged nineteen times and each performance met with a standing ovation, including one offered by Napoleon Bonaparte himself at the end of the first performance on 27 January 1813. Although the *mélodrame* of Gobert and Dubois spawned a parody, Ribié's *Petit-Pot, ou les bouchers et les charbonniers* (1804),[89] which transplanted the Indian action to Paris and a dispute between coal workers (symbolizing the Mysoreans) and butchers (the English), the success of the *mélodrame* was confined to popular peripheral theatres, whereas Jouy's tragedy was staged at the central Théâtre français.[90] Like its predecessor, it emplots the story of Tipu Sultan as a tragedy, both in terms of its generic classification (*Tippô-Saëb, Tragédie en cinq actes et en vers*) and, explicitly, in the declaration of Jouy's 'Préface'.[91] In contrast with the English-language representations explored by Teltscher and by Colley,[92] Jouy's tragedy elevates Tipu Sultan to the level of a great tragic hero in the French classical tradition, and attributes to him all the qualities of the consummate Frenchman, notably dignity.[93] In the 'Préface', Jouy writes about his own return to Europe following his travels in India, and uses the metaphor of the theatre:

> De retour en Europe, l'image d'un pays que le ciel a comblé de toutes ses faveurs, et dont les hommes ont fait le théâtre de tous les crimes et de toutes les misères humaines, est restée présente à ma mémoire.
>
> (On my return to Europe, the image of this country, upon which heaven has bestowed all its favours, and which man has made the theatre for all his crimes and all human misery, stayed forever alive in my memory.)[94]

Of course, India as a 'theatre' for European exploits appears with such frequency in eighteenth-century texts (regardless of genre) that it is something of a dead metaphor.[95] Just as writers with political agendas represented India as an empty stage to be occupied by European trade and conflicts, so too French dramatists 'occupied' the theatre of Indian history and spoke for Indian characters.[96] The accusation of 'ventriloquism' in theatre is an easy and somewhat redundant one

to make, but when considered alongside what Assayag dismissively calls Jouy's 'prétentions historiques' (historical pretensions),[97] his ventriloquism is revealed as going beyond a simple occupation of the Indian space to a means of attacking the colonial rival, Britain. As previously noted, Jouy is anxious in his 'Préface' to assert not only his credentials as an ocular witness, but also the 'historical' value of the subject matter. In a purple passage, where he recalls the Indian experiences of his youth, he posits the authenticity of his voice, stating that he had met Tipu twice and is keen that his dramatization should not be confused with overtly imaginary depictions of India:

> Dans l'âge où le spectacle de l'oppression et du malheur laisse au fond de l'âme des impressions aussi vives que durables, j'avais été témoin des maux affreux que l'avarice et la politique anglaises ont versés sur ces climats. Un seul prince à cette époque luttait contre la plus odieuse tyrannie qui ait jamais pesé sur les peuples; ce prince était Tippô-Saïb, sultan de Myzore; j'avais été admis deux fois en sa présence, et des relations intimes avec quelques officiers français à son service m'avaient mis à portée de connaître son caractère, sa noble ambition, et sa haine contre les Anglais, dont ils avaient eux-mêmes pris soin de justifier la violence ... Une intrigue d'amour entre l'Européen et la fille d'un monarque asiatique, dans un pays où les femmes habitent un asile inviolable, et ne voient d'autres hommes dans le cours de leur vie, que leur père et leur époux, est une de ces absurdités romanesques dont Le Mierre [*sic*] a donné l'exemple dans sa tragédie de La Veuve de Malabar [*sic*], mais que le succès même ne saurait justifier; je ne doute pas qu'elle n'eût paru plus révoltante encore dans un sujet historique que dans un sujet purement d'invention.
>
> (In this age where the spectacle of oppression and misfortune leaves at the bottom of the soul impressions as alive as they are enduring, I was witness to the awful ills and avarice that English politics have inflicted on these climes. One prince alone during this time has fought against the most odious tyranny that was ever inflicted on these people; this prince was Tippô-Saïb, sultan of Mysore; I was twice presented to him, and intimate contact with several French officers in his service has put me in a position to know his character, his noble ambition, his hatred of the English, the very attributes which they used in order to justify their violence against him ... A plot about a love affair between a European man and the daughter of an Asian monarch, in a country where the women live in an impregnable asylum and never see any other men over the course of their lives than their fathers and their husbands, is one of those fantastical absurdities of which Lemierre gave us an in example in his tragedy *La Veuve de Malabar* [*sic*], but [commercial] success does not justify such actions; I doubt that anything more revolting has ever appeared in either a historical or a purely fictional drama.)[98]

Authenticity is further assured by the nature of 'history' itself; according to Jouy, his subject is 'circonscrit dans les bornes les plus étroites de la vérité historique' (circumscribed by the strictist boundaries of historical truth).[99] He thus compares his impartiality with the bias of English authors who write 'sous l'influence de leur intérêt et de leur politique' (under the influence of their interests and

their politics).[100] He then proceeds to inscribe the history of Mysore within an identifiable European plot: that of Alexander. Tipu's father, Hyder Ali, is, for example, 'le plus grand homme qui ait paru en Asie depuis Alexandre' (the greatest man to appear in Asia since Alexander).[101] Readers and viewers alike are invited to identify with Tipu in the form of a Greek classical hero, an analogy which, given contemporaneous comparisons of the French emperor with Alexander, also associates Tipu with Napoleon.[102] More importantly, though, the play itself employs historicizing discourses to produce a representation of the French colonial character. As Assayag has persuasively argued, the date of production should not be overlooked. Thus Napoleon's ill-fated Egyptian mission, and the related attempt to defeat the British in India via Egypt, are evoked by the French officer Raymond in Act I, scene iii.[103] As in the 1804 version of the story, French characters are presented as the embodiment of liberty in contrast with the tyrannical British. Moreover, where the English writer 'viciously' deforms and forces the Indian into his own linguistic schema, the French playwright and historian can transparently and authentically 'speak for' India. This point is illustrated by the discussion of linguistics which Jouy appended to the published version of the play:

> *Tippô-Saëb*. Les Anglais, en appliquant aux noms indiens leur prononciation bizarre, les ont pour la plupart étrangement défigurés. Depuis quelque temps nos historiens et nos géographes adoptent sans examen cette orthographe vicieuse, et rendent ces noms encore plus méconnaissables: c'est ainsi qu'ils écrivent, à l'imitation des Anglais, Tippoo-Saib, au lieu de Tippô-Saëb, que les Indiens prononcent exactement comme je l'écris.
>
> (*Tippô-Saëb*. The English, in applying their bizarre pronunciation to Indian names, have for the most part strangely disfigured them. For some time, our historians and geographers have unthinkingly adopted this vicious spelling, rendering these names even more unrecognizable: it is because of this that they imitate the English and write Tippoo-Saib, instead of Tippô-Saëb, which the Indians pronounce exactly as I write it.)[104]

Such an epistemological occupation is evident not only in dramatizations of the fall of Mysore. These theatrical representations readily lent themselves to bombastic displays of patriotism, and the defeated Tipu Sultan was a useful means of attacking the British; as Brevannes crudely asserts in the preface to his unperformed tragedy, *Tippô-Saïb, ou la destruction de l'empire de Mysore, tragédie en trois actes*, 'Les Anglais furent constamment ses [de Tippô-Saïb] plus mortels ennemis, ils sont aussi les nôtres, ceux de tout le continent' (The English were constantly his [Tippô-Saïb's] mortal enemies, as they are also ours, those of all the continent).[105] Other genres similarly exploited the defeat of Britain's inveterate Indian foe. Le Maistre de la Tour, writing over thirty years earlier in his

Histoire d'Ayder-Ali-Khan (1783), claims to reproduce the authentic voice of the Indian by correctly inscribing the name of the Indian ruler Hyder Ali as 'Ayder':

> On s'appercevra que notre ortographe différe beaucoup de celle de tous les papiers publics qui écrivent toujours *Hyder* au lieu d'*Ayder* qui est son vrai nom … La raison qui a déterminé tous les Gazetiers à écrire *Hyder*, c'est qu'ils copient les Anglois, qui ne peuvent dire *Ay* dans leur langue, qu'en écrivant *Hy*. Les Anglois, en transportant dans leur langue un nom propre d'un autre Peuple, l'écrivent de façon qu'il ait le même son que dans la langue originale, parce que l'écriture est l'art de peindre la parole, & de parler aux yeux; pourquoi nos Traducteurs ne font-ils pas de même?
>
> (It will be noted that my spelling differs greatly from that found in other publications, which always write *Hyder* instead of *Ayder* which is his real name … The reason why all gazetteers write *Hyder* is that they are copying the English, who can say *Ay* in their language only by writing *Hy*. The English, in transporting another people's proper noun into their language, write it in such way that it has the same sound as in the original language, because writing is the art of *painting the spoken word, & of speaking to the eyes*; why cannot our translators do the same?)[106]

His linguistic explanation for the inaccuracy of preceding accounts appears rather facile: the English language prevents the rendition of the sound 'Ay' except by the syllable 'Hy'. But in addition to ridiculing the inadequacies of English, his preface makes a more shrewd point. The only reason he can find for the erroneous spelling of Hyder Ali's name is that the French gazetteers copied the English; in other words, they have been complicit in the English domination of knowledge about the Indian subcontinent. According to Le Maistre de la Tour, if writing is 'the art of painting the spoken word', then the English should inscribe Indian names in such a way that, when 'spoken to the eyes', they would have the same sound as in the original language, and French translators should be carrying out the same process. In exhorting French translators to compete with their English counterparts, he was calling for a French inscription of India.

In addition to encouraging French writing of India, Le Maistre de la Tour's *Histoire d'Ayder-Ali-Khan* employs familiar rhetorical techniques. Its title raises two expectations: the self-reflection of the memoir, and the dispassionate approach of historical analysis. In the preface the author is keen to stress the authenticity of his account:

> Nous espérons qu'on ne confondra point ces Mémoires avec les rapsodies qui ont parues depuis trois ou quatre années, sous le nom *d'Essais sur la vie*, & *d'Abrégés d'Histoire d'Hyder-Ali*, qu'on peut dire avoir été faites par gens qui n'ont ni vu ni connu Ayder, ni même eu aucune espèce de Mémoires, à moins qu'ils n'entendent par Mémoires sur la vie d'Hyder, les Contes bleus qui ont paru dans les gazettes & les journaux, qu'on a servilement copiés, & d'après lesquels on a imaginé de faire un Ouvrage tel quel, & par ce moyen en imposer au Public, sous le titre fastueux d'*Essais sur la Vie d'Ayder*, &c. Ce sont ces mêmes Ecrits, dépourvus d'exactitude & de vérité, qui nous ont obligés de donner au Public l'Histoire de la Vie d'Ayder-Ali-Khan.

> Comme témoins oculaires d'une partie de ses conquêtes & de la gloire qui l'environne, nous nous faisons un devoir de faire connoître ce Souverain, au moment où il devient si intéressant pour l'Europe, & surtout pour la France, & en cela nous croyons faire plaisir aux Historiens.
>
> (We hope that these memoirs will not be confused with those fantasies which have appeared over the last three or four years, with names such as *Essays on the Life*, & *A Short History of Hyder Ali*, of which it can be said that these were written by people who had neither seen nor known Ayder, nor even seen any of his reports, unless it is understood, by reports of the life of Hyder, those tales which have appeared in the gazettes and the newspapers, and which have been basely copied, and out of which it is possible to imagine that a work is made and imposed on the public under the luxurious title of *Essays on the Life of Ayder*, &c. It is these very same writings, deprived of all exactitude and truth, which have forced us to give to the public this History of the Life of Ayder-Ali-Khan. As an eyewitness of his conquests and the glory which surrounds him, we made it our duty to make known this Sovereign, at the very moment when he is becoming so interesting for Europe, and above all France, and in doing this we hope to please Historians.)[107]

Le Maistre de la Tour advances his claim to impartiality by explaining at great length that he has sought neither to criticize nor to flatter any nation, and noting that, where the English in India are concerned, he could have been a lot more damning as a result of the actions he had witnessed.[108] He does, however, argue that this historical account should be seen as a French victory over Britain in the battle of knowledge about India. He contends that it is only by understanding the Muslim princes who have ruled India for so long that the country itself will be understood, something that English writers have not attempted thus far to do.[109] Intellectual conquest of the subject of India is a leitmotif in the historical accounts under consideration. Legoux de Flaix, for example, makes explicit the connection between British domination of India and Anglophone linguistic control of representations of India. Born in Pondichéry and personally ruined by the Treaty of 1763, Legoux de Flaix builds his anti-British rhetoric steadily throughout his *Essai historique, géographique et politique sur l'Indoustan* (1807). Writing of Calcutta in 1757, he observes, 'En 1757, *Colcola*, que les Anglais écrivent *Calcutta*, d'après l'orthographe, à laquelle je ne dois pas m'asservir en parlant français, fut pris par Alaverdi-Kan, Souba de Bengale' (In 1757 Colcola, which the English write as Calcutta using their spelling, which I must not use as I speak French, was taken by Alaverdi-Kan, the *subahdar* of Bengal).[110] This self-conscious reflection on his role as a French writer makes the French inscription of India explicitly an act of writing against English-language representations. Legoux de Flaix, writing under the First Empire, is using the same rhetorical device as Le Maistre de la Tour before the Revolution.

Le Maistre de la Tour's historical 'analysis' of the reign of Hyder Ali blurs the distinction between fact and fiction. In the opening chapter, entitled 'Particu-

larités de la vie d'Ayder-Ali-Khan' (Particulars of the life of Ayder-Ali-Khan), the description moves from the particular to the general. A detailed physical description is given of Hyder Ali:

> il a le teint très-brun, comme les Indiens qui s'exposent au hâle de l'air & du soleil, grosse physionomie, le nez petit & relevé, la lèvre inférieure un peu épaisse; il ne porte ni barbe ni moustiache, contre l'usage des Orientaux, & sur-tout des Mahométans.
>
> (he has a very brown complexion, like all Indians who are exposed to the tanning effects of the wind and the sun, a large face, a small and upturned nose, a slightly thick bottom lip; he does not have either a beard or a moustache, unlike the custom of Orientals, and particularly Muslims.)[111]

The portrayal of his dress, however, emphasizes stereotypical features of *all* Indians and, most particularly, their feminine aspects in comparison with the virile French:

> Son habillement, comme celui de tous les Indiens, est ordinairement de mousseline blanche, avec le turban de la même étoffe; sa robe est taillée à peu près comme celles des femmes de l'Europe, qu'on appelle à l'Angloise; le corps & le bras sont très-justes & se serrent avec des cordons; le reste de la robe est très-ample & plissée, ensorte que, lorsque les Indiens vont à pied, un Page porte la queue aux Grands, depuis le moment où ils quittent le tapis, jusqu'à ce qu'ils soient dans leurs voitures.
>
> (His dress, like that of all Indians, is ordinarily made of white muslin, with a turban made of the same cloth; his robe is cut more or less in the fashion of European ladies' dresses which are called *à l'Anglaise*; the bodice and the sleeves are very tight-fitting and are tied with cords; the rest of the dress is very full and pleated, to such an extent that when Indians walk, pages carry the tails of the robes of important people from the moment that they rise from the carpet until they climb into their carriages.)[112]

Yet it is with the description of Hyder Ali's court that this generic blurring becomes most obvious. Although Le Maistre de la Tour prefaces his history with the rhetoric of eyewitness authenticity, when describing the *bayadères* at Hyder's court it is a textual representation of India which he favours, rather than an ocular account: 'On ne peut parler des spectacles, des chants & des danses sans parler des Bayadères dont l'Abbé Raynal a fait un portrait si avantageux dans son histoire philosophique' (These spectacles, songs and dances cannot be discussed without mentioning the advantageous portrait which abbé Raynal drew of these *bayadères* in his philosophical history).[113] In a further intertext, the four-page digression on the *bayadères* recalls travellers' accounts and erotic fiction which offer up the *Indienne* to the consuming gaze of the masculine European. Objectivity is eschewed in favour of an elongated reverie about the bodies of the *bayadères*, assessing the erotic and aesthetic quality of each feature. Here, the historian ceases to be an external observer, re-immersing himself instead in the bewitchment of the experience.[114]

Nineteenth-century criticism of eighteenth-century 'historical' writings emphasized the lack of intellectual rigour which they regularly displayed. From such a perspective, Le Maistre de la Tour's marrying of mimesis with fantasy could be dismissed as unhistorical. What is significant, however, is that the obfuscation of the line between fact and fiction, mimesis and fantasy, reveals how the concern of authors with the 'real' coexisted with, and was informed by, preceding textual representations. The history of India was written by both privileging eyewitness accounts and relying on earlier texts, whatever their origin or veracity.

J.-F. Michaud's *Histoire des progrès et de la chute de l'empire de Mysore sous les règnes d'Hyder-Aly et Tippoo-Saïb* (1801) reveals similar problems with the historicization of India. Like the account by Le Maistre de la Tour before it, the text appropriates, or ventriloquizes, the Indian voice in order to validate the French act of writing Indian history. While acknowledging the barbarism of Tipu against the British, Michaud suggests that:

> Si le gouvernement mysoréen avait eu, comme les Européens, des historiens pour exposer ses griefs et ses plaintes, ils n'auraient pas manqué de reprocher aux Anglais leurs invasions chez des nations qui n'avaient rien à démêler avec eux, la violation des traités les plus saints, et le mépris des premières lois de la nature, qui a donné à chaque peuple un territoire et une patrie, qui doit être pour lui seul un asile sacré. Je ne fais point cette observation pour justifier la barbarie de Tippoo-Saïb, mais l'écrivain le plus impartial ne peut pas toujours se défendre d'un secret intérêt pour un malheureux prince qui n'a eu pour historiens que ceux qui ont envahi son empire, et lui ont arraché sa vie.
>
> (If the Mysorean government had had, like the Europeans, historians to list its grievances and its complaints, they would not have failed to reproach the English for their invasions of nations which had nothing to do with them, their violation of the most holy of treaties and the fundamental laws of nature, which gave to each people a territory and a homeland that should be for them alone a sanctuary. In no way am I making this observation in order to justify Tippoo-Saïb's barbaric behaviour, but even the most impartial writer cannot always prevent himself from having a secret concern for this unfortunate prince, whose only historians have been those who have invaded his empire and stolen his life.)[115]

Rhetorically, this authorial intervention is a skilful display of impassioned impartiality. The French author, who represents universalizing humanity, is in a position to see the barbarity on both sides: the Indian and the British. Having observed that 'l'humanité ne saurait retenir ses larmes' (humanity cannot hold back its tears) in the face of Tipu Sultan's actions,[116] Michaud enumerates the atrocities committed by the British. But the British are dominating India not only in a physical sense; they are also winning the battle for knowledge, for Tipu Sultan has only the British to write his story. By aligning himself with this 'unfortunate prince' and claiming to write Indian history, Michaud, like Le

Maistre de la Tour and Jouy, is appropriating the Indian voice for a specifically Gallo-centric end.

Like the work by Le Maistre de la Tour, Michaud's history posits itself firmly within the realm of 'factual' discourse. Indeed, in his 'Avis préliminaire' Michaud suggests that the work could be of didactic use:

> Je sais que mon ouvrage est loin d'être sans défauts; le style n'est pas exempt d'incorrections; mais cette histoire est moins une production littéraire qu'un mémoire commercial et politique; un ouvrage dont les circonstances demandent la publication, et dans lequel j'ai du mettre à chercher la vérité tous les soins qu'on mettrait à l'agrément du style dans un ouvrage de goût.
>
> (I know that my work is far from being without faults; the style is not devoid of errors; but this history is less a work of literature than a commercial and political essay; a work whose publication was demanded by circumstances, and in which I had to take as much care in searching for the truth as would normally be taken in forming style in a work of art.)[117]

Undoubtedly Michaud is inviting a reading of his work in light of recent developments, particularly Napoleon's adventure in Egypt and increased French interest in India.[118] But generic dissonance is still in evidence and, once more, it is the description of the *bayadères* that emphasizes the jostling between factual and fictional discourses. The tense suddenly shifts to the present as the enchanting dance of Tipu Sultan's *bayadères* is described. Interrupting the narrative flow, a divergence from the analysis of Tipu Sultan's wars against the British, the description is almost identical to that offered by Le Maistre de la Tour eighteen years earlier. While exploiting the rhetoric of truth and eyewitness authenticity,[119] Michaud is apparently reliant on preceding textual representations.[120]

Speculations about historical causality and the writing of history itself recur throughout Michaud's account. The second volume opens with the ambivalent observation that:

> On doit applaudir à la générosité des Anglais envers Tippoo-Saïb vaincu; mais il faut avouer que leurs historiens ont trop décrié sa mémoire. Ils représentent toutes ses actions sous des couleurs ennemies. J'ai retranché de cette histoire tout ce que j'ai trouvé exagéré dans leurs récits.
>
> (We have to applaud the generosity of the English towards the defeated Tippoo-Saïb; but we must also admit that their historians have disparaged his memory too much. They depict all his actions with the bias of an enemy. I have cut out from this history all that which I found too exaggerated in their accounts.)[121]

Although he admires the actions of the English towards Tipu Sultan, Michaud criticizes their writing. It appears that it takes the impartiality of the French historian to separate fact from fiction. Yet, even as he employs the rhetoric of authenticity, Michaud's use of India as a paradigm reveals a political motivation.

Conceding the tyranny which was evident in Tipu Sultan's court, he addresses an apostrophe to the reader:

> On voit par-là que les principes qui font la base de la démocratie s'arrangent fort bien avec le despotisme oriental, et que la cour d'un monarque d'Asie ne ressemble pas mal à une peuplade démocratique.
>
> (By this it can be seen that the principles which form the basis of democracy align very well with oriental despotism, and that the court of an Asian monarch is not that much different from democracy in a small tribe.)[122]

The despotism of Tipu Sultan's court thus serves as an exemplar in a reflection on the political situation in France and the potential tyranny of the masses. Earlier in the eighteenth century, the antiquity of India was subordinated to the European debate about biblical chronology; by the time of Michaud's work, Indian history, still a means of self-reflection for French writers, was being seen through the prism of the French present and recent past.

Nostalgia and Counterfactual History

Nostalgia, or the revelation of 'the present through its falsification of the past', is, Chase and Shaw observe, frequently condemned for its spurious use of history, reliant as it is on an 'imagined past'.[123] As the theoretical work carried out by Chase and Shaw and by Lowenthal has demonstrated, nostalgia is often associated with malaise, either personal or social.[124] Representations which evoked a stable French empire in the Indies during the eighteenth century helped to reaffirm a national identity under threat from internal and external forces, notably those of *la perfide Albion*, during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. Published contemporaneously with such nostalgic interpretations, however, were counterfactual ones (which are, of course, equally problematic from subsequent analytical perspectives),[125] speculating, at a time when British power was increasing, about how the history of India could have been different under a French administration.

The paratexts in Legoux de Flaix's *Essai historique et politique sur l'Indoustan* (1807) provide a clear example of politically motivated nostalgia. Legoux de Flaix sets himself the goal of not only calling public attention to India but also of filling a lacuna in the public memory: 'Dès-lors, j'ai crû qu'il était convenable d'éveiller l'attention publique sur l'Inde, et de rappeler à la France le souvenir de ses anciennes prospérités' (From then on, I thought that it was necessary to remind France of its former prosperity).[126] But his actions are not disinterested, and French/British rivalry is a motivating factor behind his text. He states that he wishes that the French government will quickly 'mettre un terme aux prétentions toujours croisssantes d'une nation rivale' (put an end to the constantly growing

demands of a rival nation), while the end of the Seven Years War is judged 'désastreuse' (disastrous).[127]

It is perhaps inevitable that the loss of an empire would provoke a degree of anamnesis. The humiliating terms of the 1763 Treaty of Paris (dubbed by Voltaire 'cette paix si déshonorante' (this utterly dishonourable peace)),[128] and the gradual establishment of British power over India, are leitmotifs in a series of texts produced at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth. Predictably, there are lengthy assessments of the reasons behind the resounding defeat of Lally's campaign in India. The imprisonment and execution of Lally served only to intensify the polemics. The most famous of these was Voltaire's 1773 text *Fragments sur quelques revolutions dans l'Inde*,[129] but other texts exploit an imaginary, or counterfactual, French empire in *les grandes Indes*.

The role of chance as an explanation for France's defeat at the hands of 'the English' (in India a united force of Scotsmen, Englishmen and Welshmen, but invariably designated under the appellation *les Anglais*) appears in various counterfactual interpretations which emerge in accounts of the Seven Years War in India. In the *Tableau historique de l'expédition de l'Inde*, written for Lally by Aubry in 1766, an extended use of the past subjunctive strengthens his hypothesis about how the war *could have* turned out if the comte d'Aché had not been adversely affected by weather and had arrived earlier in India:

> mais deux mois, un mois même d'avance, eût suffi au Comte d'Aché, pour empêcher la jonction de cet Amiral [Stevens] avec l'Amiral Pocok, & pour rendre le Comte d'Aché maître de la mer de l'Inde; il eût suffi pour rendre le Comte de Lally maître de Saint-David, de Madras et de toute la côte Coromandel; en un mot, il eût suffi pour chasser les Anglais de Bengale où ils n'avaient pas huit cents hommes de troupes réglées.
>
> (but an earlier departure of two months, or even a month, would have sufficed for the Comte d'Aché to prevent this Admiral [Stevens] meeting up with Admiral Pocok, to make the comte d'Aché master of the Indian seas; it would have sufficed to make the Comte de Lally master of Saint-David, of Madras and of all the Coromandel coast; in a word, it would have sufficed to chase the English from Bengal, where they had only eight hundred regular troops.)[130]

In addition to these supposedly 'descriptive' accounts are alternative or counterfactual histories in which 'what if' or 'if only' speculations are indulged. Michaud, for example, speculates that India could have been won back by the French during the American Revolutionary War (1778–83):

> Si la France eussent conservé dans l'Inde leur ancien ascendant, ils auraient profité de la ligue formée contre les possessions anglaises; mais les beaux jours du gouvernement de Dupleix n'étaient plus: les Français étaient presque réduits dans l'Inde à la qualité des facteurs ou de marchands. Spectateurs timides des divisions de l'Indoustan, ils n'avaient plus aucun avantage à mettre dans la balance contre leurs ennemis.

(If France had conserved its former predominance in India, the French could have made the most of a league formed against the English possessions; but the good days of Dupleix's government were no longer: in India the French were effectively reduced to the status of merchants or manufacturers. Frightened spectators of the divisions in Hindustan, they no longer had any advantage which could tip the scales in their favour against their enemies.)[131]

A mythologized version of Dupleix's governorship allows Michaud to hypothesize about an alternative narrative to the British hegemony in India. In Fantin-Desodoards's historical preface to the *Révolutions de l'Inde pendant le dix-huitième siècle* (1796), such 'what if' speculations posit the beneficial, liberating nature of a fictive 'French India', while drawing attention to the material benefits that a French occupation would have reaped. If the French had succeeded in defeating Britain during the American Revolutionary War, according to Fantin-Desodoards :

Non-seulement les Français, regardés comme les libérateurs de l'Indostan, auraient acquis une gloire immortelle, mais les plus vastes et les plus lucratives possessions territoriales devaient être le prix de leurs efforts.

(Not only would the French, viewed as the liberators of Hindustan, have acquired everlasting glory, but the most vast and most lucrative of earthly possessions would have been the reward for their efforts.)[132]

Undoubtedly, the period in which this historical account was produced should not be overlooked. The history continues with a strongly anti-monarchical invective, and the obvious political agenda is further advanced by a predominance of republican rhetoric.[133]

Combining historicizing and fantastical discourses to advance notions of an ideal French colonial identity, albeit in an imaginary French Indian empire, the accounts by Michaud and by Fantin-Desodoards were not without influence. While this preponderance of counterfactuals and speculations may have contributed to the dismissal by Philippe Le Tréguilly and Monique Morazé of Fantin-Desodoards's work as pure 'fantasy',[134] it appears that his interpretation, along with that of Michaud, was viewed by contemporaries as an unbiased and accurate historical account. Indeed, in a summary written in 1837 of the diplomatic relations between France and Mysore (1786–99), the reader is referred to the works of Michaud and of Fantin-Desodoards for all historical detail relating to the sultans of Mysore.[135]

Such alternative histories of the French presence in India seem to provide substance for E. H. Carr's damning assertion that counterfactual history is a 'mere parlour game' and a 'red herring'.[136] In Fantin-Desodoards's diatribe against the monarchy, his speculations reveal more about his own political preoccupations than about viable alternatives in 1763 and 1783, despite the success of Suffren's

fleet against the British in the Indian Ocean.[137] In speculations about what India could have become under French rule, however, the trope of India is employed not as a means of imposing and maintaining colonial power, but rhetorically to challenge another colonizer: Britain. Contrary to the tenets of recent orthodoxies on colonial discourse – David Spurr, for example, following Edward W. Said, contends that 'tropes … come into play with the establishment and maintenance of colonial authority'[138] – here India is deployed in colonial rhetoric after that authority is lost. Although Dupleix's empire was dismantled during the Seven Years War, and British rule over India was subsequently consolidated, after 1763 India was still appropriated and colonized by French authors, who achieved at least an epistemological occupation of the Indian space.

6 THE *PHILOSOPHES*, 'ANTICOLONIALISM' AND THE RULE OF THE BRITISH EAST INDIA COMPANY

This final chapter examines the role of India in the philosophical questions generated by increasing French contact with the wider world. Adopting a comparative approach, it considers overtly philosophical texts on India, produced by the luminaries of the French 'high Enlightenment' (Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau and Raynal),[1] alongside those texts which sought scrupulously to define and categorize the subcontinent from a commercial or a political perspective. After the publication of Montesquieu's *De l'esprit des lois* in 1748, India, and more particularly Mogul despotism, became a recurring theme in philosophical debates.[2] At the same time, thanks largely to the works of Voltaire, the figure of the Brahmin became a synecdoche for religious hypocrisy. As philosophical interest grew, and European trade with India increased, India evolved from a vague signifier of oriental despotism and religious superstition to a crucial theme in the 'anti-colonialism' that became widespread in the last decade of monarchical rule. Once Britain's administrative responsibility on the subcontinent had been established, the moral implications of rule by the East India Company became a sensitive political issue in Britain, culminating with the impeachment and trial of Hastings in 1788. In France, where events in London were closely followed, India came to be perceived as a locus of British despotism. As a corollary of this, throughout the 1790s and 1800s, in a range of political treatises and commercial *mémoires*, British India functioned as a foil for 'French values' (be they republican or otherwise) and hypothetical imperial identities.

Voltaire, Brahmins and Despots

During the last forty years of the eighteenth century, India attracted French scholarly attention as never before, with *mémoires* on ancient Indian history being presented to the Académie Royale des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, and a growing collection of genuine and forged Indian manuscripts being collated in the Bibliothèque royale.[3] Alongside the interest in Indian texts was a concern with the

role which India could play in providing answers to philosophical questions about European civilization. At the forefront of this speculation was Voltaire.

Throughout the seventeenth century the Orient had largely been ignored except for its exotic potential in fiction. Over the course of the eighteenth century it assumed a new, distinctly philosophical, importance. The main factor behind this development was Voltaire's intellectual discovery of the Orient: China, the Islamic world, Persia and, in the last three decades of his life, India.[4] Modern scholars have dismissed Voltaire's construction of India as inaccurate and largely fictional,[5] but such criticisms are unhelpful in an analysis of his intellectual process and its wider influence.

Voltaire deployed his construction of India in generalized anticlerical polemics and, more specifically, in challenges to Catholicism and Judeo-Christian reasoning. The Hindu religion was used to expose both the corruptions of Catholicism and the dangers of all forms of superstition. Although Voltaire's understanding developed as he accumulated fifty-eight books devoted to India, he had a tendency to rely upon three texts, all of which served to support his ideological ends. These texts were the *Ezour-Vēdam*; Holwell's *Interesting Historical Events, Relative to the Provinces of Bengal, and the Empire of Indostan* (2nd edn, 1767); and Dow's *The History of Hindustan* (1768).[6] India informed his general philosophical works (the *Dictionnaire philosophique* (first published in 1764), the *Essai sur les mœurs et l'esprit des nations* (1756–78) and the *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie* (1770–2)), as well as those which were exclusively devoted to India. In the ancient Brachmanes, Voltaire believed that he had found a conception of religion which corresponded with his own. Man's access to God was governed by reason ('à écouter la voix de leur propre cœur' (listening to his own heart)); the Brachmanes, having neither pontiffs nor kings, 'ne pouvaient guère établir la religion sur la raison universelle' (could hardly fail to establish the religion according to universal reason).[7]

Just as he adduced the age of Indian civilization to challenge conceptions of a universal history based on Judeo-Christian chronology, Voltaire employed his interpretation of Hinduism to contest Christian assumptions. Etymological speculations were used to demonstrate the errors in biblical teachings. Thus, in the 1765 edition of the *Dictionnaire philosophique*, 'Abraham' is defined with reference to Hinduism, although Voltaire, characteristically, and mindful of the censors, stops short of claiming that Abraham *was* the Indians' 'Brahma':

> Au reste ce nom Bram, Abram, était fameux dans l'Inde et dans la Perse: plusieurs doctes prétendent même que c'était le même législateur que les Grecs appelèrent Zoroastre. D'autres disent que c'était le Brama des Indiens: ce qui n'est pas démontré.
>
> (Besides, the name Bram, Abram, was famous in India and in Persia: several philosophers even claim that it was the name of the same legislator whom the Greeks call

> Zorastre. Others say that it was the Brahma of the Indians: which has not been demonstrated.)[8]

Likewise, it is suggested that 'Adam' in the Genesis creation story could be derived from the *Veidam* (Veda):

> Quelques esprits creux, très savants, sont tout étonnés, quand ils lisent le Veidam des anciens brachmanes, de trouver que le premier homme fut créé aux Indes, etc., qu'il s'appelait Adimo, qui signifie l'engendreur; et que sa femme s'appelait Procritie, qui signifie la vie … ils disent que les Indiens furent toujours inventeurs, et les Juifs toujours imitateurs … Pour moi, je ne dis mot.
>
> (Several weak minds, very knowledgeable, are completely surprised when they read the ancient Brachmanes' Veda and find that the first man was created in the Indies, etc., that he was called Adimo, which means the procreator; and that his wife was called Procritie, which means life … they say that the Indians were always the inventors, and the Jews were always the imitators … As for me, I do not say a word.)[9]

Relying on the *Ezour-Védam*, brought to him by the comte de Maudave in October 1760, Voltaire argues satirically that Judeo-Christian mythology is merely a later imitation of traditional Hindu thought. Voltaire gave great credence to the *Ezour-Védam*, which he viewed as the work of a 'vrai sage' (a true wise man),[10] but as so often in Voltaire's work on India, he had been misinformed by a forgery. The work had, in reality, been created by missionaries in order to convert Hindus, although its authenticity as an original Veda was not effectively challenged until 1812, by Francis Ellis in the fourteenth volume of the *Asiatick Researches*.[11] Of course, Voltaire was not the only *philosophe* to be duped by the *Ezour-Védam*; Anquetil Duperron, the *savant* who, unlike Voltaire, had actually travelled to India, was its leading proponent at the end of the eighteenth century. Inaccurate information similarly appeared in numerous articles in the *Encyclopédie*, notably the entries on 'Puran', 'Ram', 'Rudiren', 'Sanscrit', 'Shaster' and 'Vedam'.[12] Voltaire's writings on Hinduism were nevertheless highly influential, in Britain as well as in France.[13]

Voltaire's challenge to Judeo-Christian conceptions of the world was greatly aided by Holwell's translation of the *Shastah of Bramah*, which appeared in his *Interesting Historical Events, Relative to the Provinces of Bengal*. Voltaire received the second edition of this text at the end of 1767, and it appears that he took Holwell's statements about the relative age of the *Shastah* at face value. While Holwell asserts that the '*Shastah* of *Bramah*, is as ancient, at least, as any written body of divinity that was ever produced to the world' and that it was written '4866 years ago', Voltaire in his 'Philosophie de l'Histoire' (which became the introduction to the *Essai sur les mœurs* in 1769) declares that '*Le Shasta* est antérieur au *Veidam* de quinze cents années' (*The Shastah* is older than the *Veda*

by fifteen hundred years).[14] Again, he had based an assertion on a translation of an inauthentic Indian text.

In article 22 of his *Fragments sur quelques révolutions dans l'Inde* (1773), his principal work dedicated to India, Voltaire attempts to challenge the monopoly of the Abrahamic religions on monotheism by denying that Hinduism is polytheistic. He adduces both Holwell and Dow in order to convince the reader of his assertions:

> Que les Indiens aient toujours adoré un seul Dieu, ainsi que les Chinois, c'est une vérité incontestable. On n'a qu'à lire le premier article de l'ancien Shasta, traduit par M. Holwell. La fidélité de la traduction est reconnue par M. Dow, et cet aveu a d'autant plus de poids de tous deux diffèrent sur quelques autres articles.
>
> (That the Indians have always worshiped one God, in the same way as the Chinese, is an incontestable truth. One has only to read the first article of the ancient Shastah, translated by Mr Holwell. The faithfulness of this translation is recognized by Mr Dow, and this recognition is all the more convincing because these two differ over several other articles.)[15]

The erroneous belief that Hindus worshipped idols and numerous gods is attributed to Jesuit missionaries:

> D'autres jésuites missionnaires aux Indes, moins éclairés que leurs confrères de la Chine et soldats crédules naguère d'un despote artificieux, ceux-là ont pris les brames, adorateurs d'un seul Dieu pour les idolâtres.
>
> (The other Jesuit missionaries in the Indies, less enlightened than their fellow brothers in China and, formerly, credulous soldiers of an artificial despot, took the Brahmins, worshippers of one God alone, for idolaters.)[16]

Although Voltaire had access to the Jesuits' *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses* (published between 1707 and 1776) and makes direct reference to them both in the *Essai sur les mœurs* and the *Fragments sur quelques révolutions dans l'Inde*,[17] he uses them primarily as a point of comparison; while Holwell dismisses 'Popish authors',[18] Voltaire adduces them only in so far as their inadequacies counterpoint the perfectibility of Hindu civilization. In article 7 of the *Fragments*, 'Des Brames' (About Brahmins), the allusion to the 'Edifying and Curious Letters', sent home to Europe by missionaries who 'se sont hâtés, en arrivant dans l'Inde, d'écrire que les brames adoraient le diable, mais que bientôt ils seraient tous convertis à la foi' (hastened, on arriving in India, to write that the Brahmins worshipped the devil, but that soon all would be converted to the faith), is as much a means of exposing the corrupt behaviour of the Catholic priests as it is an exploration of Hindu religious practices:

> Les brames rigides ont conçu une horreur inexprimable pour nos moines quand ils les ont vus se nourrir de chair, boire du vin, et tenir à leurs genoux de jeunes filles dans la

confession. Si leurs usages ont été regardés par nous comme des idolâtries ridicules, les nôtres leur ont paru des crimes.

(The rigorous Brahmins developed an inexpressible horror for our monks when they saw them eat flesh, drink wine and entertain young girls on their knees during confession. If their customs were regarded by us as being ridiculous idolatries, ours seemed to them to be crimes.)[19]

Like Holwell's representation, Voltaire's philosophical India relied upon emphasizing the originality of Hinduism and its influence on Western civilization: both on ancient Greece (notably Pythagoras and the doctrine of metempsychosis),[20] and on the Jewish and Christian faiths, which owed the act of baptism to 'le bain expiatoire et sacré du Gange' (the expiatory and sacred bathe in the Ganges).[21]

More generally, the Brahmins provided Voltaire with a means of contesting all religious superstition. The prevailing view of Hinduism had been propounded at the end of the seventeenth century by Furetière in his *Dictionnaire universel*; his definition of Brahmins as Indian clerics (below) was reproduced almost verbatim in the Jesuit *Dictionnaire universel françois et latin, vulgairement appelé Dictionnaire de Trévoux*:

BRAMIN. s. m. C'est un Prestre de la Religion des Indiens idolatres, successeurs des anciens Brachmanes. Les *Bramins* sont la premiere race des Banians, & sont si versez en Astrologie, qu'ils ne manquent pas d'une minute à predire des Ecclypses.

(BRAHMIN. noun. m. Is a priest in the Indian idolatrous religion, successors to the ancient Brachmanes. The *Brahmins* are the premier race of the Banians & are so versed in Astrology that not a minute goes by without them predicting eclipses.)[22]

Voltaire's theories of Hindu monotheism and the rationalism of the ancient Brachmanes challenged some aspects of the prevailing orthodoxy. The modern-day Brahmins, in contrast, were to Voltaire the quintessence of religious superstition. In the article 'Des Brames' (On Brahmins) in *Fragments sur quelques révolutions dans l'Inde*, an expansive peroration essentializes both the ancient Brachmanes and their degenerate successors:

Toute la grandeur et toute la misère de l'esprit humain se sont déployées dans les anciens bracmanes, et dans les brames, leurs successeurs. D'un côté, c'est la vertu persévérante, soutenue d'une abstinence rigoureuse; une philosophie sublime, quoique fantastique, voilée par d'ingénieuses allégories; l'horreur de l'effusion du sang; la charité constante envers les hommes et les animaux. De l'autre côté, c'est la superstition la plus méprisable. Ce fanatisme, quoique tranquille, les a portés depuis des siècles innombrables à encourager le meurtre volontaire de tant de jeunes veuves qui se sont jetées dans les bûchers enflammés de leurs époux ... La terre entière est gouvernée par des contradictions.

(All the grandeur and all the misery of the human spirit were exhibited in the ancient Brachmanes and in the Brahmins, their successors. On the one hand, they have a persevering virtue, supported by a rigorous abstinence; a sublime philosophy, albeit fantastic, masked by ingenious allegories; a horror of the shedding of blood; con-

> stant charity towards men and animals. On the other hand, they display the most shameful superstition. This fanaticism, although peaceful, has caused them since time immemorial to encourage the voluntary murder of so many young widows who have thrown themselves onto the flaming funeral pyres of their husbands … The entire world is governed by contradictions.)[23]

This association of *sati* with superstition was a leitmotif in Voltaire's *œuvre*, appearing even in those texts which were not explicitly about India. In his earlier historical work *Précis du siècle de Louis XV* (1763), *sati* is presented as the nadir of religious superstition, although he admits to a certain ambivalence regarding the courage required for such an act:

> L'ancienne coutume immémoriale de leurs philosophes, de finir leurs jours sur un bûcher, dans l'espoir de recommencer une nouvelle carrière, et celle des femmes, de se brûler sur le corps de leurs maris, pour renaître avec eux sous une forme différente, prouvent une grande superstition, mais aussi un grand courage dont nous n'approchons pas.
>
> (The ancient immemorial custom of their philosophers, to end their days on a funeral pyre, in the hope of starting a new career, and that of women, of burning themselves on the bodies of their husbands in order to be born in a new form, is evidence of great superstition, but also of a great courage to which we do not come close.)[24]

His late work the *Lettres chinoises, indiennes, et tartares* (1776) once more emphasizes the fanatical superstition of the Brahmins. Unlike his earlier invectives on *sati*, however, this account cites an eyewitness description, manipulating the autopic device to serve a purpose quite different from that of Holwell's original:

> M. Holwell a vu dans son gouvernement, en 1743, la plus belle femme de l'Inde, âgée de dix-huit ans, résister aux prières et aux larmes de Milady Russell, femme de l'amiral anglais, qui la conjurait d'avoir pitié d'elle-même et de deux enfants charmants qu'elle allait laisser orphelins: elle répondit à Mme Russell: 'Dieu les a fait naître, Dieu en prendra soin'. Elle s'étendit sur le bûcher, et y mit le feu elle-même avec autant de sérénité que des dévotes prennent le voile parmi nous.
>
> (Mr Holwell, while governor, saw in 1743 the most beautiful woman in India, eighteen years of age, resist both the prayers and tears of Milady Russell, wife of the English admiral, who implored her to have pity on herself and on two charming children whom she was going to leave orphaned: she replied to Mrs Russell: 'God gave them life, God will take care of them'. She lay down on the pyre, and set fire to it herself with as much serenity as religious women here take the veil.)[25]

Voltaire concludes by describing the act as 'un épouvantable sacrifice' (a horrible sacrifice). Despite his extensive reliance on Holwell, Voltaire did not share his English counterpart's empathetic view of *sati*. While Holwell encourages his reader to eschew an ethnocentric view of this seemingly incomprehensible foreign custom, for Voltaire the act remained a horrible example of religious superstition and one which deserved to be condemned.[26]

It is salutary to consider how far Voltaire's philosophical exploitation of Indian concepts influenced other writers. His use of the Brahmins as a synecdoche for all religious superstition and clerical corruption appears to have become a cultural reference point. Plays such as Lemierre's highly successful *La Veuve du Malabar* (1770) and La Harpe's unpublished *Les Brames* (1783) both rely on this motif; their indebtedness to Voltaire's association of *sati* with the superstition of the Brahmins is inescapable.[27] The critical reception of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's *conte*, *La Chaumière indienne* (1791), suggests that readers had come to view the Brahmins as part of the anticlerical Enlightenment lexicon rather than as an Indian reality; some reviewers saw the *conte* as a thinly disguised attack on the Church. In *La Chaumière indienne*, the Brahmin Grand Pandect is the epitome of religious corruption. In a gesture which recalls the parable of the Good Samaritan, he turns away the unclean English *savant* in the midst of a storm; the Englishman subsequently finds shelter and wisdom with a Pariah. In the 'Préambule' to the second edition of the *conte*, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre countered the criticism that his work had received: 'Un abbé, déguisé sous le nom d'un Anglais, a prétendu, dans son journal, que, sous le nom de brames, je voulais tourner nos prêtres en ridicule' (An abbé, under the disguise of an English name, has claimed, in his newspaper, that, under the name of Brahmins, I wanted to ridicule all our priests).[28] He goes on: 'Je n'ai donc voulu peindre dans les brames que les brames; et c'est ce que savent tous ceux qui ont été dans l'Inde, ou qui en ont lu les relations' (By portraying the Brahmins I thus wanted to portray only the Brahmins; and this should be obvious to all those who have either travelled in India or read accounts of it).[29]

Just as Brahmins, at the end of the eighteenth century, became synonymous with clerical corruption, at the beginning of the century Mogul India had been synonymous with despotism. According to Furetière's 1697 dictionary definition, despotism was a characteristic feature of India and the Orient more generally:

> DESPOTIQUE. adj. m. & f. Qui sent le maistre, qui tient du maistre. Les Princes d'Orient sont absolus & despotiques. C'est un gouvernement despotique, où le Prince fait tout ce qu'il veut, sans en rendre raison à personne.
>
> (DESPOTIC. adj. m. & f. Of someone who believes himself master, or behaves as a master. Oriental Princes are absolute & despotic. It is a despotic government, where the Prince does all that he desires, without having to justify himself to anyone.)[30]

For Montesquieu, in his *De l'esprit des lois* (1748), 'La puissance doit donc être toujours despotique en Asie' (Power must therefore always be despotic in Asia);[31] according to his geo-determinist thesis, the climate made despotism inevitable. The Orientalist Constantin Volney, writing in 1791, continued to promote the notion that despotism was governed by environmental factors. The argument

served his revolutionary agenda, which held that enlightenment would be achieved only through French tutelage:[32]

> L'Indien, accablé de préjugés, enchaîné par les liens sacrés de ses castes, végète dans une apathie incurable. Le Tartare, errant ou fixé, toujours ignorant et féroce, vit dans la barbarie de ses aïeux …
>
> (The Indians, overcome with prejudices, shackled by the sacred lines of their castes, vegetate in an incurable apathy. The Tartars, nomadic or fixed, always ignorant and ferocious, live in the barbaric situation of their ancestors …)[33]

By the second half of the eighteenth century, there were, however, writers who challenged this synonymy of India and despotism. Once again, Voltaire's was the dominant voice, arguing in the *Essai sur les mœurs* that despotism was less widespread than had been previously supposed. In a chapter devoted to the Moguls, he asserts that India, rather than being a despotic country, is a collection of competing tyrannical powers: 'ce qu'on peut résumer de l'Inde en général, c'est qu'elle est gouvernée comme un pays de conquête par trente tyrans' (to sum up, what can be said about India in general is that it is governed like a conquered country by thirty tyrants).[34] Contradicting travellers' accounts,[35] he concludes that despotism is neither inevitable or permanent:

> Ils [nos voyageurs] n'ont pas considéré que cette puissance, uniquement fondée sur les droits des armes ne dure qu'autant qu'on est à la tête d'une armée, et que ce despotisme, qui détruit tout, se détruit enfin de lui-même.
>
> (They [our travellers] have not considered that this power, uniquely based upon the rights of arms, lasts only as long as one is at the head of an army, and that this despotism, which destroys everything, is ultimately destroyed by itself.)[36]

Over the course of the eighteenth century, the subject of India gradually receded in philosophical debates about oriental despotism; but after the Mogul Emperor Shah Allam II accorded *diwani* (the right of receiving the revenue of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa) to the East India Company in 1765, India once more become central to philosophical considerations of colonialism on the subcontinent. The question of despotism returned, this time focusing on the tyranny of the British East India Company.

'Anticolonialism', India and Raynal

If India enjoyed a certain currency in philosophical debates throughout the eighteenth century, its prominence after 1770 was largely due to its role in what modern scholars have called 'anti-colonial' thinking. As Pitts has demonstrated, the confluence of various anti-colonial opinions in France in the two decades before the French Revolution can be partly attributed to hostility to the *ancien régime*: 'anti-colonial' arguments and mounting criticism of *ancien régime* poli-

tics were linked.[37] Increasing trade with the wider world generated discussion about France's accumulation of territory and trading posts; for many thinkers, the acquisition of land for commercial purposes was not necessarily pernicious or oppressive. Montesquieu, Voltaire and Raynal, among others, believed that commerce was, or should be, quite distinct from the oppressive practices which modern commentators group under the term 'colonialism'.[38] Raynal may have questioned the principles upon which Europe should found colonies, but these colonies were seen, in general, as mutually beneficial; as Voltaire put it, commerce was the 'premier lien des hommes' (principal link between men).[39] Where misgivings were expressed about the activities of the Europeans in the colonies (the 'anti-colonialism' of modern-day scholarship), criticism clustered around four main axes prior to the Revolution: approval of American independence, physiocratic opposition to overseas expansion, idealization of the 'noble savage' and opposition to the slave trade (*la traite*).[40] In the specific context of India, however, only the first two of these arguments were conspicuous.

By the time that its company privileges were suspended by *arrêt* on 13 August 1769, the French East India Company (the Compagnie Perpétuelle des Indes) was plagued by poor returns. In the years immediately preceding the suspension of the company's privileges, the Ministère de la Marine was inundated with *mémoires* emphasizing the detrimental nature of the Indian trade to France's finances.[41] Voltaire, himself a shareholder in the French East India Company, offered in his *Précis du siècle de Louis XV* a particularly acerbic assessment of the French commercial relationship with India. Summing up the impact of the Seven Years War, he reflects:

> Enfin il n'est resté aux Français, dans cette partie du monde, que le regret d'avoir dépensé, pendant plus de quarante ans, des sommes immenses pour entretenir une Compagnie qui n'a jamais fait le moindre profit, qui n'a jamais rien payé aux actionnaires et à ses créanciers du profit de son négoce; qui, dans son administration indienne n'a subsisté que d'un secret brigandage, et qui n'a été soutenue que par une partie de la ferme du tabac que le roi lui accordait: exemple mémorable et peut-être inutile du peu d'intelligence que la nation française a eu jusqu'ici du grand et ruineux commerce de l'Inde.
>
> (Finally there remained with the French, in this part of the world, only the regret that they had spent, over the course of more than forty years, immense sums of money in the upkeep of a Company which never provided the least profit, which never paid anything from its trade profits to its shareholders and its creditors, which in its Indian administration survived only by means of secret brigandry, and which has been upheld only by the share of the farming of tobacco accorded to it by the king: a memorable and perhaps useless example of the lack of intelligence which the French nation has had up to now in the grand ruinous trade with India.)[42]

Moreover, between 1763 and 1789 Versailles did not perceive the subcontinent as a suitable site for French expansionist policies, although military action against

British interests in India was occasionally seen as a potential means of challenging the superiority of *la perfide Albion*.[43] Although the Compagnie's trade with India was linked with the profitable French sugar trade in the Antilles,[44] forming part of the nexus which connected trade in the Atlantic with that in Asia, the Indian operation cost far more than the value of goods imported. Despite offsetting losses with the farming of tobacco, the Compagnie consistently ran at a deficit. A statement for the Compagnie, dated 1 July 1769 to 1 January 1770, reports a loss of 4,865,000 *livres*.[45] Yet, notwithstanding the relative paucity of France's interests on the subcontinent, India figured disproportionately in French debates about the colonies.

Voltaire's objections to European dominance of the subcontinent were, in part, related to his idealization of India, which, in the *Essai sur les mœurs*, he claimed was the one country which needed nobody.[46] Article 2 of his *Fragments sur quelques révolutions dans l'Inde* opens with an attack on English and French traders in India who had used commerce as a means of conquest and plunder:

> Le commerce, ce premier lien des hommes, étant devenu un objet de guerre et un principe de dévastation, les premiers mandataires des compagnies anglaises et françaises, salariés par leurs commettants sous le nom de gouverneurs, furent bientôt des espèces de généraux d'armée.
>
> (Commerce, this principal link between men, having become an object of war and a principle of devastation, the first agents of the English and French companies, paid by their directors under the name of governors, had soon become akin to army generals.)[47]

Other arguments were, however, motivated by more contingent factors. Increasing British administrative dominance of the subcontinent, combined with the outbreak of the American War of Independence, stirred up a residual Anglophobia into which the India question was readily assimilated. For example, Beaumarchais, a playwright, holder of royal office under Louis XV and ardent supporter of American independence, in his apostrophizing tract, *Le Vœu de toutes les nations et l'intérêt de toutes les puissances dans l'abaissement et l'humiliation de Grande-Bretagne* (1778), yokes together English oppression in the Americas and the Indies:

> L'Anglois a beau faire, il ne pourra donner le change sur ses desseins ambitieux: toute l'Europe a vu que l'Anglois vouloit opprimer, & anéantir, s'il eût pû toutes les branches de commerce, que les Puissances de l'Europe font en Amérique, & dans les Indes.
>
> (Whatever the Englishman does, he will be unable to change his ambitious intentions: all of Europe has seen that the Englishman wanted to oppress, and annihilate if he could, every form of trade that the European powers carried out in America and in the Indies.)[48]

French commentators based in India undoubtedly saw the American War as the ideal situation to exploit in order to redress the inequality between the British and the French in India. The comte de Modave, the former aide-de-camp to Lally, writing in December 1776 at the end of a journey from Agra to Hyderabad, expressed fear about what would happen in India if France did not take advantage of British difficulties in America. Describing British dominance since 1763, he suggests that the British are building up their power base by stealth: 'Ils enchaînent l'une après l'autre toutes les puissances de l'Inde par la terreur, les intrigues, les caresses, les promesses et les menaces' (One after another they are enslaving all the Indian powers, by terror, intrigue, caresses, promises and threats).[49] Linking the colonies of America and India together using the language of commerce, Modave argues that, for the British, increased oriental trade would be an ideal recompense for any potential loss in the West:

> Chaque jour ils font quelques pas qui les avancent vers ce but et il me parait hors de doute que depuis quelques années, le projet d'envahir l'Indoustan et le commerce universel de l'Asie orientale s'est offert à leur spéculation comme un dédommagement avantageux de ce qu'ils peuvent perdre en Amérique. Il est impossible de donner un autre sens à leurs demandes.
>
> (Every day they advance a few steps towards this goal and for several years it has seemed to me that the project to capture Hindustan and the entire East Asian trade has presented itself as an advantageous compensation for what they could lose in America. It is impossible to give any other meaning to their demands.)[50]

He concludes his report by evoking the balance of power between the British and the French in India, observing: 'les Anglais, aujourd'hui seuls sur ce grand théâtre, se préparent dans le secret et le silence à étendre sans mesure le rôle important qu'ils y jouent depuis que nous ne sommes plus rien' (the English are today alone on the large stage of India, secretly preparing to extend immeasurably their already major role, a role which they have had since we became nothing there).[51] Modave presents the situation in America as a fortuitous opportunity for the French, who could redress the balance of power in India; they should do so before the British lost control of their American colonies and diverted their attention solely to India. What is ostensibly part of a discourse about the American colonies overthrowing the tyranny of the British is displaced to the Indian *théâtre*, where it becomes an argument for an increase in French trade.

The role that India played in debates about the colonies was not homogeneous. While the American War of Independence stimulated connections between discourses of liberty, Anglophobia and commerce, the focus of discussions shifted over time. This is illustrated by the *Journal encyclopédique*, edited by Pierre Rousseau, to which Voltaire contributed articles. Over the course of the 1760s and 1770s, philosophical exchanges within the periodical evolved as news of British rule in India, particularly Bengal, gradually reached the French reading public.

The anonymous review of Holwell's *Evénémens historiques, intéressans, rélatifs aux provinces de Bengale et de l'Indostan* welcomes the publication as a piece of scholarly research and, like Voltaire in his *Essai sur les mœurs*, his *Fragments sur quelques révolutions dans l'Inde* and his *Dictionnaire philosophique*, unquestioningly accepts Holwell's conclusions about the origins of the Brahmins.[52] With the publication in French of the first two volumes of *The History of Hindustan* (1768) by Alexander Dow, a former East India Company servant, the preoccupations evident in the review (once more anonymous, as was the convention in the *Journal encyclopédique*) were markedly different. Published in the March 1769 issue, it begins in the form of a standard review, with a description of the content of the work, but rapidly becomes a more wide-ranging critique of the dangers of colonial expansion and, specifically, nefarious British practices in Bengal. The writer questions the right of Englishmen, including Dow, to travel to India:

> mais d'où M. Dow a-t-il appris que les Indiens soient malheureux? Qui est-ce qui a chargé la nation anglaise d'aller dans les Indes renverser les anciennes constitutions & la forme des gouvernements, pour en rendre les peuples moins infortunés? Les appas de leurs richesses n'entreraient-il pas pour beaucoup dans ce projet, qui ne pourrait s'exécuter qu'à force du sang répandu! Ne serait-on pas mieux de laisser les Indiens tels qu'ils ont été de tout temps, & tels qu'ils veulent être? Que chaque nation s'attache à reformer ce qu'elle trouvera de nuisible à son propre bonheur; elle aura assez de devoirs à remplir, sans s'embarrasser de la félicité des autres peuples de la terre: c'est quand la maison brûle, aller étendre le feu qui est chez son voisin!
>
> (but where did Mr Dow learn that the Indians are so unhappy? Who charged the English nation to travel to the Indies, to overthrow ancient constitutions & forms of government in order to make the people less unfortunate? No doubt the attractions of their riches did not play a large part in this project, which could be executed only by shedding blood! Would not we have been better to leave the Indians as they were since the beginning of time, & as they wished to be? Let each nation endeavour to reform that which it finds harmful to its own happiness; she will have ample duties to fulfil, without entangling herself in the happiness of other people; it is as though your house were on fire and you went and put out that which was burning your neighbour's house!)[53]

The final exhortation that all countries should concern themselves primarily with domestic problems suggests a physiocratic basis to the anti-expansionist rhetoric.[54] By the time of the review of the third volume of Dow's *The History of Hindustan* in 1779, the debate on the colonies had once more evolved. Again, India is the starting point, but the focus of the diatribe is explicitly the actions of the British and the East India Company:

> Mais ces cris [of the Indian multitude] y appellent-ils les Anglais & leurs cruautés dans le Bengale? Laissent-ils la juste espérance qu'ils seront les bienfaiteurs & les restaurateurs de l'Inde? Serviront-ils, comme le prétend l'auteur la cause de la justice & l'humanité, en précipitant du trône ces petits tyrans; & le prétexte de donner un

> bon gouvernement à tant de millions d'hommes est-il suffisant pour autoriser une usurpation qui entraînera avec soi tant de crimes et de malheurs? C'est une grande question.
>
> (But will these cries [of the Indian multitude] invoke the English & their cruelties in Bengal? Do they allow the just hope that the English will be the benefactors & and the restorers of India? Will they serve as a pretext, as the author claims, for justice & humanity, casting those petty tyrants from the throne; & is the pretext for giving a good government to so many millions of men sufficient reason to authorize a usurpation which will entail so many crimes and misfortunes? It is a large question indeed.)[55]

The 1769 *Journal encyclopédique* review of Holwell's *Interesting Historical Events* was characterized by a general academic curiosity in India; the 1773 review of the first two volumes of Dow's *The History of Hindustan* revealed physiocratic objections to European expansionism; by 1779, with the review of the third volume, the argument had evolved into an invective specifically against the administration of the British East India Company. The language of crimes, misfortunes and justice identifies the Company with petty oriental tyrants; like the Moguls before them, the English are usurping a legitimate Indian (Hindu) power.

If the increase of British power in India provided a focal point for French economic and philosophic debates on European activities around the globe, the tendency for those debates to concentrate on India was largely due to the popularity of abbé Raynal's *Histoire philosophique et politique de l'établissement et du commerces des Européens dans les deux Indes* (1770). Research carried out by Hans Wolpe has estimated that between 1770 and 1789 there were thirty authorized and forty pirated editions of the *Histoire*, making it, along with Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Heloïse* and Voltaire's *Candide*, one of the three most widely read books in France in the period.[56] A collective work, to which the most famous contributor was Diderot, it went through three major editions; the final edition, dating from 1780 and distributed in 1781, was condemned by the parliament of Paris and resulted in the issue of a warrant for Raynal's arrest.[57] Created in the wake of France's defeat in the Seven Years War, the *Histoire* provided a timely questioning of colonial expansion. As the introduction asks: 'L'Europe a fondé par-tout des colonies; mais connoît-elle les principes sur lesquels on doit les fonder?' (Europe has founded colonies everywhere; but does it know the principles on which it should found them?).[58] As a co-authored work which went through multiple editions, the *Histoire* saw mood and rhetoric varying not only from edition to edition but also within individual entries.[59] The contributions of Diderot ensured that the work became a damning indictment of abuses in the colonies and that the final edition of the work was more trenchant than the original.[60]

While the title made reference to the East and West Indies, where France had suffered territorial losses under the Treaty of Paris (1763), the text was more a

compendium of philosophical ideals than a geographical treatise.[61] Discussing the colonial activities of England, France, Spain, Portugal and Holland, the *Histoire*, especially in its final edition, provides a conspectus of the various critical perspectives on European encounters overseas. Notwithstanding the preoccupations of individual contributors, the civilizing power of trade is a constant throughout the three editions. As Raynal's introduction puts it: 'qui est-ce qui a rassemblé, vêtu, civilisé ces peuples? et qu'alors toutes les voix des hommes éclairés qui sont parmi elles m'ont répondu: c'est le commerce, c'est le commerce' (who brought together, clothed, civilized these peoples? and it is then that the voices of all enlightened men there answered me: it is commerce, it is commerce).[62] Although all European colonizing powers are examined, there is a strong element of reflection on France's position in the world. Yet, by the final edition, of the five colonizing countries it is Britain and its colonies which dominate in terms of content, occupying 1,000 pages of the ten-volume work; France is given 900 pages, Spain 750, Portugal 480 and Holland 250.[63] The sympathy of the *philosophes* towards American independence, exemplified by Diderot's impassioned plea for American liberty,[64] was partly responsible for the prominence of the British colonies. But there were aspects of British administrative power in India which stimulated universalizing reflections on the dangers of colonial activity:

> Dominateurs sans contradiction dans un empire où ils n'étoient que négocians, il étoit bien difficile que les Anglois n'abusassent pas de leur pouvoir. Dans l'éloignement de sa patrie, l'on n'est plus retenu par la crainte de rougir aux yeux de ses concitoyens. Dans un climat chaud, où le corps perd de sa vigueur, l'ame doit perdre de sa force. Dans un pays où la nature & les usages conduisent à la mollesse, on s'y laisse entraîner. Dans des contrées où l'on est venu s'enrichir, on oublie aisément d'être juste.
>
> (Unopposed rulers in an empire where they had been only merchants, the English found it very difficult not to abuse their power. Far away from their homeland, they were no longer restrained by the fear of embarrassing themselves in the eyes of their countrymen. In a hot climate, where the body loses its vigour, the soul must lose its strength. In a country where nature & customs lead to indolence, one is easily led astray. In countries where one came to find riches, one easily forgets to be just.)[65]

Stimulated by British abuses in Bengal after the famine of 1770, the diatribe becomes a more generalized reflection on the dangers of any form of colonial encounter. Emphasizing the impact on the British in India of living in another culture (the 'psychic disempowerment' of cultural contact, as modern critics have called it),[66] Diderot argues that commercial activity overseas has caused the British to lose one of their essential national characteristics: justice.

The Rule of India by the East India Company

After the British East India Company's assumption of *diwani* in Bengal in 1765, the erosion of boundaries between commerce and political power in the colonies became a prominent subject of debate in Britain and France.[67] As reports of the devastating famine in Bengal reached Europe in 1769–70, and British news of the East India Company's refusal to alleviate the suffering of the Indians was translated into French, the topic of India assumed a political currency that would persist for the next twenty years. As Edmund Burke famously asked in 1783 during the debate on Fox's India Bill:

> Could it be believed, when I entered into existence, or when you, a younger man, were born, that on this day, in this House, we should be employed in discussing the conduct of those British subjects who had disposed of the power and the person of the Grand Mogol?[68]

In Britain, the dispute between the Company and the government, which led to the Regulating Act of 1773 and the trial of Hastings (opening in February 1788), ensured the continuing newsworthiness of the subject. The preoccupation similarly persisted in France. The published account of Tipu Sultan's embassy to Versailles in August 1788 contextualizes the state occasion with reference to the trial of Hastings in Britain:

> Dans un moment où tous les regards sont, pour ainsi dire, attachés sur les Ambassadeurs de TIPPOO-SAÏB, du fils d'un des plus puissans & des plus étonnans Monarques dont l'Inde puisse s'enorgueillir, & non moins digne de notre admiration que son père; dans ce moment où la fameuse affaire de M. HASTINGS occupe toutes les têtes, anime toutes les conversations de notre société, il nous a semblé que l'Ouvrage que nous offrons aujourd'hui au Public n'est pas indigne de son attention.
>
> (At a time when all eyes are, so to speak, fixed on TIPPOO-SAÏB's Ambassadors, the son of one of the most powerful & surprising Monarchs of which India can boast, & no less worthy of admiration than his father; at a time when the famous trial of Mr HASTINGS occupies all minds and animates all conversations in our society, it seems to us that this Work which we offer today to the Public is no less worthy of its attention.)[69]

The debate on the East India Company in Britain – especially the social problem of Company nabobs returning from India with vast fortunes from the 'spoils of ruined provinces'[70] – generated a range of satirical plays evoking the nefarious effects of decadence and luxury: Samuel Foote's *The Nabob* (1772), Richard Clarke's *Asiatic Plunderers* (1773), Henry Frederick Thompson's *The Intrigues of a Nabob: or, Bengal the Fittest Soil for the Growth of Lust, Injustice and Dishonesty* (1780) and Mariana Starke's *The Sword of Peace* (1788). As Marshall has demonstrated, the engagement of the British public with the Indian question may not have been especially deep but the issue was prevalent throughout the early years

of George III's reign.[71] Across the channel, a similar anxiety was evident, with slightly different emphases.

French concerns about the rule of the British East India Company first emerged in 1768 in abbé Roubaud's *Le Politique Indien*. Making use of English-language sources,[72] this *compte rendu* opens with an extended meditation on the dangers of granting powers of governance to a trading company:

> le Gouvernement des Colonies ne demande pas seulement des hommes de commerce, mais encore des hommes d'Etat. Or ce choix ne peut être fait par une troupe mercantile. Il faut que ces hommes se forment dans l'Inde même.
>
> (the Government of the Colonies does not demand only men of commerce, but also men of State. But this choice cannot be made from a mercantile grouping. It is necessary that these men be trained in India itself.)[73]

Dupleix, according to Roubaud, had overlooked the specific characteristics of trade in India:

> En cherchant à établir l'équilibre de puissance entre les deux Nations, il donna réellement tout l'avantage à la Nation ennemie, parce qu'il n'avoit pas de justes idées des lieux & du commerce.
>
> (In looking to establish the balance of power between two nations, he had really given all advantage to the enemy nation, because he did not have correct ideas about the place & the commerce).[74]

If Dupleix had conflated political action with mercantile ambition, it was the British who had combined the two most treacherously. In the chapter devoted to the English colonies, Roubaud calls the British the 'nouveaux Maîtres de l'Inde' (new Masters of India)[75] and outlines the overlapping power bases of trade and administration. British rule, he claims, was not inevitable; if Britons had become the new masters of India it was because they 'eurent pour eux la possession, la force, le zèle, la confiance, l'intrigue, le machiavelisme au suprême degree' (had possession, force, zeal, confidence, power of intrigue, Machiavellianism to such a supreme degree).[76]

Roubaud creates a counter-narrative in which French inspiration is responsible for British success. Counterfactual speculations emphasize the precarious and contingent reasons behind British expansion:

> Dans toutes ces conjectures, les Anglois ont dû leur salut à leurs ennemies, ils leur doivent leur agrandissement & leur gloire. Après avoir profité des grandes vues de M. de la Bourdonnais, ils ont embrassé le vaste système de M. Dupleix: ce qu'ils ont exécuté dans le Bengale, M. Dupleix l'avoit entrepris sur la côte de Coromandel, & il l'eût exécuté sur toutes les côtes de l'Indoustan ... Il est certain que sans les déserteurs François qu'il [Lally] jetta dans le crime par le défaut de paye, & sans les Princes Indiens qu'il aliéna par des outrages & par un indigne mépris pour sa propre Nation, les Anglois n'eussent jamais triomphé dans le Coromandel. Il est certain que s'il avoit

> donné des secours à M. de Bussi, au lieu de le rappeller du Nord avec ses troupes; les Anglois n'auroient pas donné la Loi dans le Dékan. Il est certain que s'il n'eût pas sacrifié tout le reste de l'Inde à ses entreprises personnelles, les Anglois ne seroient pas les maîtres de Bengale, &c. &c. &c.
>
> (In all these speculations, the English owed their salvation to their enemies, they owe them their enlargement & their glory. Having benefited from the grand visions of M. de la Bourdonnais, they embraced the vast system of M. Dupleix: what they implemented in Bengal, M. Dupleix had undertaken on the Coromandel coast, & would have implemented on all the coasts of Indostan ... It is certain that without the French deserters, whom he [Lally] provoked to crime through their lack of pay, & without the Indian Princes, whom he alienated through outrages & an undignified scorn for his own Nation, the English would never have triumphed in Coromandel. It is certain that if he had given help to M. de Bussi, rather than calling him back from the North, the English would not have made the law in the Deccan. It is certain that if he had not sacrificed all the rest of India to his personal enterprises, the English would not have been the masters of Bengal, &c, &c, &c.)[77]

Writing before the debates on the impeachment of Hastings, and before Europe received any reports of British misrule in Bengal during the famine, Roubaud emphasizes the despotic behaviour of East India Company:

> On dit qu'ils traitent les naturels du pays avec une sévérité inflexible ... qu'ils gouvernent avec une insolence despotique, qu'ils énervent & aliénent leurs soldats par dur esclavage ... qu'ils abandonnent l'autorité aux mouvements de l'intérêt personnel, que leurs meilleurs établissements ne répondent pas au but de leur fondation, que leurs taxes sont souvent imposées sans régle & sans mesure.
>
> (It is said that they treat the natives of the country with an inflexible severity ... that they govern with a despotic insolence, that they infuriate & alienate their soldiers through harsh enslavement ... that they abandon authority to the whims of personal interest, that the best factories do not correspond to the aims of their establishment, that they often impose taxes without rule & reason.)[78]

Use of the term 'despotism' with reference to Company rule became commonplace in British anti-Company invectives of the 1770s and 1780s.[79] Roubaud's account was an earlier association of British and Mogul despotism,[80] and it further linked British rule with the rhetoric of slavery: provinces were placed under the yoke of the British, while indigenous soldiers were enslaved and made to fight for the Company.[81] Elsewhere, Roubaud adopts a physiocratic perspective to question the very value of 'luxurious' British trade with India: 'En quoi consistent les retours des Indes? en objets de luxe: ce n'est assurément pas là un soulagement pour les pauvres; ni un bien pour la Nation' (Of what consist the objects brought back from the Indies? Luxurious objects: it is surely not by these that the lot of the poor will be alleviated; nor a benefit for the Nation).[82]

Roubaud was the first of several French writers to link the rule of the British East India Company with despotism, a perception which was to gain credence from reports of British abuses in Bengal. Reviewing Meunier's French translation of Bolts's *Considerations on Indian Affairs* (1775), the *Journal encyclopédique* took the opportunity to criticize the hypocrisy of the English 'republicans' who 'se révoltent contre le joug qu'on voudrait leur imposer, ne rougissent pas de l'imposer aux autres ... [et] oppriment impunément les Indous' (revolt against any imposition of a yoke on them, but suffer no shame in imposing it on others ... [and] oppress the Hindoos with impunity).[83] Even the more conservative *L'Année littéraire*, which tended to eschew political discussion in favour of aesthetic analysis, included in its review of Bolts's work a condemnation of the 'tyrannie & des cruautés sans nombre' (tyranny and innumerable cruelties) of the British, although it avoided a full description of the violence of English rule in Bengal for fear that it would outrage the sensibilities of the reader.[84] Censure of British despotism reached its apogee in the third edition of Raynal's *Histoire des deux Indes* of 1780:[85]

> Qui auroit imaginé que cette même compagnie, changeant tout-à-coup de conduite & de système, en viendroit bientôt au point de faire regretter aux peuples du Bengale le despotisme de leurs anciens maîtres? Cette funeste révolution n'a été que trop prompte & trop réelle. Une tyrannie méthodique a succédé à l'autorité arbitraire. Les actions sont devenues générales & régulieres; l'oppression a été continuelle & absolue. On a perfectionné l'art destructeur des monopoles; on en a inventé de nouveaux. En un mot, on a altéré, corrompu toutes les sources de la félicité publique.
>
> (Who would have imagined that this same company, changing suddenly its behaviour & its conduct, would soon reach the point of making the people of Bengal miss the despotism of their former masters? This sinister revolution has been only too soon & too real. A methodical tyranny has taken the place of authority occasionally exerted. Actions have become general & regular; oppression has been continuous & absolute. The destructive art of monopolies has been perfected and new ones have been invented. In a word, the company has tainted and corrupted all public sources of happiness.)[86]

The despotism of the East India Company was not only comparable with that of the Mogul despots: it had surpassed it.

Given the influence of Dow and Holwell on the *Histoire des deux Indes*, the presence of anti-Company rhetoric is unsurprising.[87] Anglo-French influence was, however, reciprocal: the *Histoire* itself, translated into English in 1776 and undergoing twelve editions between 1776 and 1794, was widely cited in the British press during the trial of Hastings.[88] Alongside this shared anti-Company discourse, there developed a distinctively French conception of India, which ceased to be an abstract site of noble Brachmanes, Hindu customs and oriental despotism, and became a specific locus of competing European colonialisms

where French ideals could be pitted against the rule of *les Anglais*. While there was a strong element of Anglophobia in this discourse, condemnation of British rule on the subcontinent was not univocal.[89] Conceding the abuses which had resulted from British trade in India, Voltaire asserted:

> Mais cette Angleterre qui domine aujourd'hui dans tout le Bengale, qui étend ses possessions en Amérique, du quatorzième degré jusque par delà le cercle polaire, qui a produit Locke et Newton, et enfin qui a conservé les avantages de la liberté avec ceux de la royauté, est, malgré tous ses abus, aussi supérieure aux peuples de l'Inde que la Grèce fut supérieure à la Perse du temps du Miltiade, d'Aristide et d'Alexandre.
>
> (But this England which dominates today in all of Bengal, which spreads its possessions across America from the fourteenth degree to beyond the arctic circle, which produced Locke and Newton, and which finally conserved all the advantages of liberty with a monarchy, is, despite all its abuses, as superior to the Indian peoples as Greece was superior to Persia in the time of the Miltiades, Aristide and Alexander.)[90]

Published in 1773, *Fragments sur quelques révolutions dans l'Inde* makes no reference to the Bengal famine, and makes clear Voltaire's respect for the country that had produced Locke, Newton and a constitutional monarchy – a respect which remained undiminished throughout his life. Ultimately, he concludes that chance alone is the reason for English success on the subcontinent, as the closing lines of *Fragments* make clear:

> Tel est en général le sort de l'Inde; il peut intéresser les Français, puisque malgré leur valeur, et malgré les soins de Louis XIV et de Louis XV, ils y ont essuyé tant de disgrâces. Ils intéressent encore plus les Anglais, puisqu'ils se sont exposés à des calamités pareilles et que leur courage a été secondé de la fortune.
>
> (Such is, in general, the fate of India; it should interest the French since, despite their valour, and despite the care taken by both Louis XIV and Louis XV, they have endured there so many disgraces. The Indies still interest the English because, even though they have been exposed to similar calamities, their courage has been assisted by good fortune.)[91]

Almost twenty years later, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre displayed a similar ambivalence. Granting the evils of British rule in India, he welcomed the creation of Sir William Jones's Asiatic Society of Bengal (1784), which he believed would bring European civilization to barbaric India. In the foreword to *La Chaumière indienne* (1791) he remarked:

> Si la philosophe est venue autrefois des Indes en Europe, pourquoi ne retournerait-elle pas aujourd'hui civilisée, de l'Europe aux Indes devenues barbares à leur tour? Il vient de se former à Calcutta une société de savants anglais, qui détruiront peut-être un jour les préjugés de l'Inde, et par ce bienfait compenseront les maux qu'y ont apportés les guerres et le commerce des Européens.
>
> (If philosophy in the past came to Europe from India, why should not civilized Europe today return to the Indies, which have become barbaric in their turn? In Calcutta, a

> society of English scholars has just been formed which will perhaps one day destroy the prejudices which exist about India, and this advantage will compensate for all the evils which European warfare and trade have brought there.)[92]

The growth of British trading interests in India also stimulated reflections on French commercial expansion after the Seven Years War. *Mémoires* written after 1763 show the importance of Indian commerce in broader economic thinking.[93] The anonymous author of the *Etat Actuel de l'Inde* (1787), identifying himself as a shareholder in the new Compagnie des Indes, argued that the natural advantages of France over Britain assured success in trade with India:

> En traçant une esquisse du grand tableau du commerce de l'Inde, on voit quel travail nous avons à faire pour porter notre commerce en Asie à un point d'accroissement qui le releve de la foiblesse où la prépondérance des Anglois dans cette partie du monde l'a réduit. Nous avons de grands avantages sur nos concurrens & nos rivaux; l'activité qui tient à nos mœurs, une population plus grande, & ce que nous permettent de risquer les richesses d'une nation laborieuse, industrieuse, & qui possede un territoire vaste & fertile.
>
> (In providing a sketch of the large vista that is commerce in India, we can see the work which we have to do in order to take our commerce in Asia to such a point of growth that will lift it from the weak state to which it has been reduced by the preponderance of the English in this part of the world. We have some great advantages over our competitors & our rivals; industriousness which is part of our character, a larger population, & this will allow us to risk the riches of a hardworking and industrious nation, which possesses a vast & fertile territory.)[94]

Such tracts often employed the rhetoric of liberty in arguing for a restoration of the balance in trade, contending that the liberty of the French to trade was perfectly consistent with the liberty of Indians. In 'Supplément aux observations sur l'état actuel de l'Inde', a *mémoire* of February 1777 which counselled the Court to exploit British difficulties in America, Law de Lauriston, the governor of Pondichéry, conceived of the French as potential liberators of India. Parity of trade with Britain would be achieved only by 'tirant les provinces où sont situés les établissements de la servitude où elles languissent depuis tant d'années sous le joug d'une nation qui veut tout envahir' (dragging the provinces in which the trading stations are located from the servitude in which they have been languishing for so many years under the yoke of a nation which wants to invade everything),[95] and so Indian liberty and French economic interests went hand in hand. The *mémoire* dwells at length on British oppression of French trading interests, concluding: 'Enfin, après tant d'années, il paraît aujourd'hui qu'on veut s'occuper sérieusement des moyens de secouer le joug honteux sous lequel des malheureuses circonstances nous ont forcé de plier' (Finally, after so many years, it seems today that we want to deal seriously with the means of shaking off the

shameful yoke to which we have been forced to submit by unfortunate circumstances).[96]

The notion of the French as liberators appeared in other reports written by French personnel who had travelled and worked in India before the Revolution. For example, the marquis de Bussy, in a report dating from 1783, makes the same link as Law de Lauriston between the oppression of French trade and the oppression of the Indians:

> Sans vouloir pressentir les vues du ministère, je crois, d'après un long séjour en Asie, et l'expérience que j'ai acquise depuis mon retour en Europe, pourvoir assurer que la constitution du gouvernement français résiste à l'idée de vouloir devenir puissance de terre en Inde, mais qu'elle nous prescrit en même temps de faire tous nos efforts pour détruire celle que les Anglais s'y sont formés, et prévenir, par-là la ruine entière de la nation française et l'anéantissement total de son commerce dans l'Inde.
>
> (Without wishing to pre-empt the views of the ministry, I believe, after a long stay in Asia, and the experience which I have acquired since my return to Europe, that I am in a position to affirm that the constitution of the French government precludes any idea of wanting to become a territorial power in India, but that it obliges us, at the same time, to commit all our efforts to destroy the power that the English have formed there, and thus to prevent the entire ruin of the French nation and the total annihilation of its commerce in India.)[97]

At the end of his report he suggests that the Mogul princes are awaiting an external force to liberate them from the 'yoke' of the East India Company:

> Les Princes d'Asie, l'Empereur lui-même, souffrent impatiemment le joug des Anglais, cela est vrai; ils attendent un événement qui rompe leurs chaînes et les remettre en possession de leurs biens et de leur autorité.
>
> (The princes of Asia, the Emperor himself, suffer impatiently under the yoke of the English, that is true; they are waiting for an event which will break their chains and put them once more in possession of their property and their authority.)[98]

This belief in the French as prospective liberators in India persisted at least until the defeat of Tipu Sultan by the British in May 1799. A *mémoire* written in 1797 by the governor of Chandernagor, Montigny, assumed that revolution in India was inevitable:

> Les Princes Indiens étoient au désespoir du despotisme tyrannique du gouverneur Hastings, et ne soupiraient qu'après l'arrivée des Français pour faire éclater leurs ressentiments. J'ai été témoin à cette époque, de l'espoir qui animoit les Dorbars de l'Inde, et depuis j'ai vû le changement qu'a opéré la conduite Politique du Lord Cornwallis quoiqu'il en soit, il paroit certain que la prudence et la sagesse de ce gouverneur-général, ne pourrait que retarder la révolution qui doit nécessairement s'opérer un jour dans les Colonies Anglaises.
>
> (The Indian princes were at the height of despair with the tyrannical despotism of governor Hastings, and desired only the arrival of the French to unleash their wrath.

> I was witness during this period to the hope that had animated the Durbars of India, and I saw the change caused by the Political conduct of Lord Cornwallis for what it was worth, it appears certain that the prudence and wisdom of this governor-general can only delay the revolution which must necessarily arrive one day in the English Colonies.)[99]

The idea of the French as potential liberators was not confined to French personnel with experience in India; it was also evident in philosophical discourses. In the *Histoire des deux Indes*, Diderot's vision of enlightened French colonial policy exhorted the French to practise equity in order to increase both their reputation and power:

> Alors les François, regardés comme les libérateurs de l'Indostan, sortiront de l'état d'humiliation auquel leur mauvaise conduite les avoit réduits. Ils deviendront l'idole des princes & des peuples de l'Asie, si la révolution qu'ils auront procurée devient pour eux une leçon de modération. Leur commerce sera étendu & florissant, tout le tems qu'ils sauront être justes. Mais cette prospérité finiroit par des catastrophes, si une ambition démesurée les poussoit à piller, à ravager, à opprimer.
>
> (And so the French, viewed as the liberators of Indostan, will leave behind the state of humiliation to which their unfortunate behaviour has reduced them. They will become the idols of the princes & the peoples of Asia, if the revolution that they will have procured becomes for them a lesson in moderation. Their commerce will be widespread & flourishing, and all the time they will know to be just. But this prosperity will end in catastrophe, if untempered ambition incites them to pillage, to rampage and to oppress.)[100]

French national interests were thus synonymous with universal human rights. As early as 1780, Diderot was advancing a notion of enlightened colonial policy which proponents of France's 'second' empire under the Third Republic would advocate as the *mission civilisatrice*.[101]

By the end of Napoleon's Empire, India was no longer a locus for the philosophical concerns which had preoccupied Montesquieu and Voltaire. As France's trade with India declined, the subcontinent was increasingly seen in terms of British oppression. When the five *comptoirs* of Pondichéry, Karikal, Mahé, Yanaon and Chandernagor were definitively returned to France after the Treaties of Paris (1814–15), they were in a forlorn state.[102] As the comte du Blanc bemoaned in a *mémoire* on Indian commerce in 1814, Pondichéry, 'naguère si florissante qui dictait la loi aux princes de l'Inde est aujourd'hui dans une misère extrême, ruinée et prise successivemens dans les guerres de 1760–78 et 93' (formerly so prosperous, which dictated the law to the princes of India is today at the height of misery, ruined and captured successively in the wars of 1760–78 and 93).[103] Yet the image of India as a site of British oppression had philosophical implications of its own, stimulating counterfactual speculations about enlightened French rule in India. In 1771, Anquetil Duperron had suggested that the

French were viewed differently by the Indians, arguing that a horror like the 'Black Hole' of Calcutta could never happen to the French:

> Tous ces traits on fait regarder les François comme des guerriers généreux, sur la parole desquels un prince malheureux pouvoit compter, quand même leurs intérêts en souffriroient … Malgré l'étendue de nos conquêtes et les maux qu'elles ont dû naturellement entraîner, jamais il ne nous est rien arrivé de pareil au massacre des Anglois à Kalkuta et à Patna.
>
> (All these traits mean that the French are viewed as generous warriors, on whose word an unfortunate prince can count even when their interests are implicated … Despite our extensive conquests, and the ills which have naturally followed, never has a similar massacre to that of the English at Calcutta and Patna befallen us.)[104]

By 1811, the idea of the civilizing and benevolent presence of the French in India had reached the level of the banal. In the Fête d'Indoustan, a one-off event held at the Cirque Olympique on 18 April 1811, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's *La Chaumière indienne* was adapted as an equestrian ballet. The adaptation excised all references to the English, and saw the French traveller liberating all pariahs and ensuring the punishment of the corrupt 'Pandect'. It ended with a celebration of universalizing French interventionism, in which all the inhabitants of the Mogul's court welcome enlightened French philosophy.[105]

Modern postcolonial critics may well see the notion of exportable French universalism as another example of colonial rhetoric: French authors are vicariously occupying the Indian space.[106] The fact remains, however, that the French presence in India was not entirely vicarious, but persisted on the ground in the form of the *comptoirs*. Metropolitan politicians manipulated vague notions of Indian loyalty to France in order to justify that presence;[107] Indians, after the creation of the British Raj, similarly exploited the five French *comptoirs* as a haven from British rule.[108] As the *comptoirs* were to play a small but dynamic role in the development of Indian nationalism, so too the discourse of a liberating French colonialism, begun in response to British rule in India after 1765, and adopted by Napoleon with reference to Egypt, become a leitmotif of French colonial policy throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[109]

CONCLUSION

This study has aimed neither to overstate the commercial and political importance of India to French interests, nor to understate the impact on France's global position of the 1763 Treaty of Paris or the events of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. Instead, by focusing on how the French conceived of India during the European encounter with the declining Mogul empire, it has revealed a significant counter-narrative to the *grand récit* of the British empire in India. Moreover, it has demonstrated that the colonial policy long associated with the 'second' French empire (that of the Third Republic), the so-called *mission civilisatrice*, had its antecedents in the French response to increasing control of the subcontinent by the British East India Company.

The strategies used to represent India in the diverse range of texts examined are both atemporal and historically contingent. Certain techniques are equally evident in British cultural production: feminization, mythologization and the employment of other markers of alterity to designate the inferiority of Indians and their mores. The historicizing and philosophizing strategies, however, are distinctively French. From 1744, the *mémoires* of the Académie Royale des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres and Voltaire's investigations introduced the history of ancient India to the French reading public. After 1763, the history of India in the eighteenth century, and, more particularly, the French presence on the subcontinent, became a prominent subject matter in various genres, from drama (tragedies, melodramas and operas) to popular history writing. Indeed, after the publication of Roubaud's *Le Politique Indien* (1768), the construction of India in the French imagination frequently went beyond any simple dualistic opposition of India and France, revealing a compulsion to establish oppositional European identities. In literary genres, where the India represented was divorced from its geographical referent, as well as in travelogues, histories, philosophical meditations, economic treatises and reports sent back to France from the *comptoirs*, India was used as a means of counterpointing a hypothetical, benevolent French rule overseas with the despotism of the British East India Company and the oppression of Indians. Even before abbé Roubaud's prescient observation about the East India Company as the 'nouveaux Maîtres de l'Inde' (new Masters

of India),[1] fictional and discursive accounts frequently perceived India as a space to be occupied, literally and figuratively, by Europe. For all the growing interest in discovering an 'authentic' Indian culture (frequently conflated with Hinduism to the neglect of Islam, Buddhism and Sikhism), throughout the period it was the European encounter with the subcontinent that predominated in fictional accounts (such as the *contes* of Voltaire and of Mme de Benouville), as well as in the more polemical histories and tracts.[2]

A corollary of India as the locus of British despotism was the mythologization of the French political and commercial presence in India. The earliest example of such mythologization of the past occurred in 1766, three years after the Treaty of Paris circumscribed French influence on the subcontinent to the five enclaves. The assertion that French had lost 'all' of India – a specious description, but one which was to be deployed with such frequency under the Third Republic[3] – was first propagated in Lally's trial by both the defence and the prosecution. Used by personnel in India, and by successive regimes in France (monarchical, *directoire*, consulate and restoration), this notion of a lost 'empire' provided a means of hypothesizing about a liberating French form of colonial rule.

After 1783, successive governments actively avoided opportunities to establish a French empire on the subcontinent. Although individuals plotted, and Napoleon Bonaparte exploited 'Citizen' Tipu's desires for French aid against the British in 1799, official policy consistently encouraged trade with India, rather than territorial expansion.[4] As Launay, Commissaire de la Marine, warned the Département de la Marine in 1800, the Département needed to be very cautious of people who had been in India advancing seductive plans for the 're'-conquering of the subcontinent.[5] These speculations about French rule liberating India from the 'yoke' of the British did, however, persist, revealing a central aspect of the French construction of India: its imaginary potential.

In the account of his travels to India (1761–9), Le Gentil, astronomer and member of the Académie royale des sciences, reflected with uncharacteristic sentimentality:

> Enfin, l'Inde est un pays rempli, pour ainsi dire, de magie & d'enchantemens; ceux qui y mettent le pied se trouvent en quelque sorte métamorphosés, si l'expression est permise.
>
> (Finally, India is a country full, so to speak, of magic & enchantments; those who set foot there find themselves in some way, metamorphosed, if the expression be permitted.)[6]

By 1815 the European intellectual conquest of India was well advanced: the 'magic & enchantments' had been catalogued, and Hindu mythology studied comparatively alongside that of Greece and Rome.[7] India was also, following the defeat of the Sultan of Mysore in May 1799, firmly under the administra-

tive control of the British East India Company. With the return of the small *comptoirs* to French control under the settlement of 1815, the French political role in India was permanently subordinated to that of the British. Nevertheless, the image of India as a lost empire persisted in a range of French discourses, fictional and factual, sustaining political speculations that could be as unlikely and as romantic as Le Gentil's mystical musings. This tendency was not confined to aesthetic works, in which authors such as Bonaparte, Jouy and Michaud could claim a special empathy with Indian characters; it was equally evident in ministerial reports.[8] Whereas these strategies of representation may have been motivated by historical contingency during the Napoleonic Wars, they continued throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Unlike other 'lost' colonies of the *ancien régime* (notably Canada and Saint-Domingue), India was established as an important trope for the rehearsal of European rivalries. While the *comptoirs* continued to function as outposts of the French colonial system until 1962, the reality of life in French India became increasingly remote from metropolitan thought. Indeed, the divorce was such that, in French culture and political discourses, the *comptoirs* became a *lieu de mémoire* of what might have been, rather than what was.

Writing under the Third Republic, the colonial commentator Marcel Dubois welcomed the creation of Indochine as recompense for what he called France's 'lamentable loss' of India during the eighteenth century.[9] Representative of a particular theme in republican colonial discourse, Dubois's assessment of the French encounter with India during the *ancien régime* exemplifies the tendency to narrativize the new colonial venture of the nineteenth century with reference to the perceived failure of the eighteenth. The French 'empire' in India was never as grandiose as its description claimed, but it did play an important rhetorical role during the creation of the second French empire.

NOTES

The following abbreviations are used throughout the notes:

AD Archives diplomatiques, Quai d'Orsay, Paris: série Asie-Océanie (1944–55), sous-série Inde française.

AN: AE Archives nationales, Paris: Affaires étrangères.

AN: M Archives nationales, Paris: Marine.

CAOM Centre des Archives d'Outre-mer, Aix-en-Provence.

RFHO *Revue française d'histoire d'outre-mer*.

SVEC *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation).

Introduction

1. Le comte de Modave, *Voyage en Inde du Comte de Modave 1773–1776 (Nouveaux mémoires sur l'état actuel de Bengale et de l'Indoustan)*, ed. J. Deloche (Paris: École française d'extrême-orient, 1971), p. 549. It is probable that the intended recipient was Bellecombe, governor of Pondichéry. In the entry authored by Jaucourt in the *Encyclopédie ou dictionnaire raisonné* (1751–80), it is observed that 'Le peuple a fait une division qui n'est rien moins que géographique: il appelle *grandes Indes*, les *Indes* orientales, & *petites Indes* les *Indes* occidentales' (The people have made a division which is nothing less than a geographical one: they call the East Indies the large Indies & the West Indies the small Indies). J. le rond d' Alembert and D. Diderot, *Encyclopédie ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences des arts et dés métiers* (1751–80), facsimile edn, 36 vols (Stuggart-Bad Cannstatt: Freidrich Frommann, 1967), vol. 8, p. 662.
2. Article XI, Treaty of Paris (10 February 1763), AD, vol. 5. In addition to the five principal *comptoirs*, France possessed nine *loges* (factories) in Calicut, Surat, Francepath, Cassimbazar, Yougida, Dacca, Balasore, Patna and Masulipatam.
3. French writers invariably used 'Angleterre' (England) and 'les Anglais' ('the English') when Britain was meant. Throughout this study, following the example of Martyn Cornick, 'England' and 'the English' are generally used only when translating from the French or if specific reference is made to the country. M. Cornick, 'Distorting Mirrors: Problems of French-British Perception in the *Fin-de-siècle*', in. M. Cornick and C. Crossley (eds), *Problems in French History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), pp. 125–48, on p. 144, n. 1.
4. This periodization, which neatly divides the French imperial project into two discrete periods or movements – the old colonies of the *ancien régime* and the new colonies of

the nineteenth century – is favoured by Anglophone and Francophone historians alike; see, for example, R. Aldrich, *Greater France: A History of French Overseas Expansion* (London: Macmillan, 1996), p. 20, and R. Girardet, *L'Idée coloniale en France de 1871 à 1962* (1972; Paris: Pluriel 1978), p. 22. Interest in the second French empire has focused almost exclusively on North Africa and Indochina.

5. Canonical military accounts range from nineteenth-century publications, such as G. B. Malleson's *The History of the French in India, from the Founding of Pondichéry in 1674 to the Capture of that Place in 1761* (1868; Delhi: Gian, 1986) and E. J. Rapson's *The Struggle between England and France for Supremacy in India* (London: Trübner, 1887), to twentieth-century monographs such as S. P. Sen's *The French in India, 1763–1816* (Calcutta: n.p., 1958). Recent publications on the French East India Company include the comprehensive work by P. Haudrère, *La Compagnie française au XVIII^{e} siècle (1719–1795)*, 4 vols (Paris: Librairie de l'Inde, 1989). Under the Third Republic writers began to develop the theory of Dupleix, Lally and Suffren as the grandfathers of the French imperial adventure, a trend which continues to this day. Notable works include T. Hamont, *La fin d'un empire français aux Indes sous Louis XV: Lally-Tollendal* (Paris: Plon, 1887); A. Martineau, *Dupleix et l'Inde française*, 4 vols (Paris: Champion, 1920–8); G. Jouveau-Dubreuil, *Dupleix ou l'Inde conquise* (Marseille: Imprimerie marseillaise, 1942); M. Vigié, *Dupleix* (Paris: Fayard, 1993); and M. Bertrand, *Suffren 1729–1788: de Saint-Tropez aux Indes* (Paris: Perrin, 1991). The historian Jacques Weber has documented the history of the individual French *comptoirs*, see his *Pondichéry et les comptoirs de l'Inde après Dupleix: La démocratie au pays des castes* (Paris: Denoël, 1996).
6. The literary and cultural critiques by C. Petr (*L'Inde des romans* (Paris and Pondichéry: Kailash Éditions, 1995)) and J. Assayag (*L'Inde fabuleuse: Le charme discret de l'exotisme français (XVII^{e}–XXe siècles)* (Paris: Éditions Kimé, 1999)) present different problems. In the former, the political presence of the French in India throughout the nineteenth century down to 1954 is overlooked, while in the latter, the *longue durée* approach creates a monolithic and misleading account of the French encounter with India.
7. Academic concern with British cultural interest in India before the heyday of nineteenth-century imperialism is exemplified by J. Drew's *India and the Romantic Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); N. Leask's *British Romantic Writers and the East: Anxieties of Empire*, Cambridge Studies in Romanticism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); A. Richardson and S. Hofkosh (eds.), *Romanticism, Race, and Imperial Culture, 1780–1834* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1996); T. Fulford and P. J. Kitson (eds), *Romanticism and Colonialism: Writing and Empire, 1780–1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); and M. J. Franklin (ed.), *Romantic Representations of British India* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006).
8. K. Teltscher, *India Inscribed: European and British Writing on India 1600–1800* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 255; and R. Ballaster, *Fabulous Orients: Fictions of the East in England 1662–1785* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 358.
9. For a succinct account of Wellesley's exploitation of the French threat in India, see E. Ingram, *Commitment to Empire: Prophecies of the Great Game in Asia 1797–1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), pp. 189–91.
10. See, for example, C. Farrère, *L'Inde perdue* (1935; Paris and Pondichéry: Kailash, 1998), pp. 206–7. As Das stresses, Dupleix's expansionism was his own and not a reflection of

either company or governmental policy; S. Das, *Myths and Realities of French Imperialism in India, 1763–1783* (New York: Peter Lang, 1992), pp. 4–5.

11. First Treaty of Paris of 30 May 1814, AD, vol. 5. As the focus of this study is French representations, a significant date within French history has been chosen. An additional advantage of 1754 is that it encompasses the victory of the British East India Company in the Battle of Plassy (1757), an event which has been posited as marking the inauguration of the British empire in India. See K. Teltscher, '"The Fearful Name of the Black Hole": Fashioning an Imperial Myth', in B. Moore-Gilbert (ed.), *Writing India 1757–1990: The Literature of British India* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), pp. 30–51, on p. 40.
12. M. Antoine, *Louis XV* (Paris: Fayard, 1989), p. 595. Antoine relies heavily on Jürgen Habermas's definition of 'public space'. While Habermas's restrictive use of the term 'bourgeois' is problematic, his notion of a market of cultural products, creating a discourse independent to that of the court, is still useful. J. Habermas, *L'Espace public: archéologie de la publicité comme dimension constitutive de la société bourgeoise*, trans. M. B. de Launay (Paris: Payot, 1978), p. 38. The majority of works considered in this study were published in Paris, reflecting Henri-Jean Martin's contention about the dominance of Paris over the publishing industry; see H.-J. Martin, *Le Livre français sous l'Ancien Régime* (Nantes: PROMODIS, Éditions du cercle de la Librairie, 1987), pp. 113–32.
13. A characteristic of C. Beaune's *Naissance de la nation France* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985). For a useful overview of recent works on French 'national identity' in the eighteenth century, see D. Bell, 'Review: Recent Works on Early Modern French National Identity', *Journal of Modern History*, 68 (1996), pp. 84–113.
14. The majority of the authors considered are French, the notable exception being Antoine Polier, born in Lausanne to Huguenot immigrants.
15. C. Prendergast, *The Triangle of Representation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), p. 15.
16. The regular publication of the *recueils* of the Jesuits' 'Lettres édifiantes et curieuses' contributed to this interest in textual accounts of India; *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses, écrites des missions étrangères, par quelques missionnaires de la compagnie de Jésus*, 34 vols (Paris: chez les Frères Guérin, 1707–76).
17. E. W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, 2nd edn (1978; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1995) pp. 168–70, on p. 169. Ravi has usefully coined the term 'romantic imperialism' to describe the nineteenth-century tendency within French literature to occupy the Indian space, 'at least in the realm of fiction, if not in real life'; S. Ravi, 'Marketing Devi: Indian Women in French Imagination', *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, 19 (1999), pp. 131–50, on p. 135. An obverse of this argument is that offered by Schwab in his *La Renaissance orientale*, namely that the true home of European cultural involvement in India was in France and Germany, countries both 'unburdened' by empire. R. Schwab, *La Renaissance orientale* (Paris: Payot, 1950), p. 43.
18. Le comte du Blanc, 'Mémoire sur le commerce de l'Inde: Précis de celui que fesait l'ancienne compagnie des Indes et celle établie en 1785' (14 April 1814), AN: AE, B^{3}459.
19. M. L. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 9. Said's thesis, frequently misquoted, is one of the targets of M. J. Franklin's 'General Introduction and [Meta]historical Background [Re]presenting "The Palanquins of State; or, Broken Leaves in a Mughal Garden"', in Franklin (ed.), *Romantic Representations of British India*, pp. 1–44, on p. 15.

20. Voltaire, *Fragments sur quelques révolutions dans l'Inde, sur la mort du comte de Lally, et sur plusieurs autres sujets* (1773), in *Œuvres complètes de Voltaire*, 20 vols (Paris: J. Bryainé [1858?]), vol. 6, pp. 167–262, on p. 173.
21. As Meyer argues, in the period between 1689 and 1815, Britain and France 'were directly at war for fifty-six years, not counting periods of masked conflict when war was fought through third parties, or of direct hostilities without a preliminary declaration of war – which would give a total of over sixty years'. J. Meyer, 'The Second Hundred Years' War (1689–1815)', in D. Johnson, F. Crouzet and F. Bédarida (eds), *Britain and France: Ten Centuries* (Folkestone: Dawson, 1980), pp. 139–63, on p. 139. See also R. Tombs and I. Tombs, *That Sweet Enemy: The French and the British from the Sun King to the Present* (London: Pimlico, 2007), esp. pp. 286–301.
22. See Chapter 1, below, p. 16.
23. For Nora, *lieux de mémoire* are places where national memory embodies itself. P. Nora, 'Présentation', in P. Nora (ed.), *Les Lieux de mémoire*, 3 vols (1984; Paris: Gallimard, 1997), vol. 1, 15–21, on pp. 15–16. The *comptoirs*, conversely, symbolized the memory of a French empire which was largely imaginary. It is worth noting that following the establishment of the India National Congress in 1885, Indian nationalists exploited the *comptoirs* as a haven against the dominant European colonizer, the British.
24. As argued by Marcel Dorigny in relation to the loss of Canada; see his chapter 'Aux origines: l'indépendance d'Haïti et son occultation', in P. Blanchard, N. Bancel and S. Lemaire (eds), *La fracture coloniale: La société française au prisme de l'héritage colonial* (Paris: La Découverte, 2005), pp. 47–57, on pp. 47–9. In recent years, the Haitian Revolution has been 'recovered' and has begun to assume a certain prominence, chiefly thanks to the work of Laurent Dubois; see his *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution and Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787–1804* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), and *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).
25. Recently, colonial discourse analysis has moved away from Said's divisive binarism. Homi Bhabha, in his critical writings of the 1980s, contends that the relationship between the colonized and colonizer is more complicated and ambiguous than Said's earlier works allowed. Sara Suleri (1992) eschews the binary model and posits in its place a 'psychic disempowerment', manifesting itself as an 'anxiety of empire' in the colonizer. This notwithstanding, Said's 'codes of Orientalist orthodoxy' still dominate much scholarly research into European encounters with the rest of the world. See Said, *Orientalism*, pp. 38–9; H. Bhabha, 'The Other Question', in P. Mongia (ed.), *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader* (London: Arnold, 1997), pp. 37–54, on p. 42 (first published in *Screen*, 24 (1983), pp. 18–36); S. Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 2–4; and S. Greenblatt, 'Introduction: New World Encounters', in S. Greenblatt (ed.), *New World Encounters* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), pp. vii–xviii.
26. An axiom observed by Balachandra Rajan in her chapter 'Feminizing the Feminine: Early Women Writers on India', in Richardson and Hofkosh (eds), *Romanticism, Race, and Imperial Culture*, pp. 149–72, on p. 151.
27. Said advocated 'contrapuntal reading' of texts so that 'both processes, that of imperialism and that of resistance to it' should be taken into account, thus 'extending our reading of the texts to include what was once forcibly excluded – in *L'Etranger*, for example, the whole previous history of France's colonialism and its destruction of the Algerian state, and the later emergence of an independent Algeria (which Camus opposed)'. E. W. Said,

Culture and Imperialism (1993; London: Vintage 1994), pp. 78–9, on p. 79. Reading the history of French involvement in India contrapuntally with British domination and Indian resistance provides a more nuanced account of the collision and collusion which contributed to a developing sense of mutual perception between the French, the British and the inhabitants of India.

1 The French Presence in India between 1754 and 1815

1. M. Vigié, 'La politique de Dupleix 1742–1754', in P. Decraene (ed.), *Trois siècles de présence français en Inde* (Paris: CHEAM, 1994), pp. 17–36, on p. 17.
2. See, for example, C. Canivet's *Les colonies perdues* (Paris: Jouvet, 1884), p. 172; and E. Lonchampt's history *Dupleix et la politique coloniale sous Louis XV: Conférence faite à Paris le 24 janvier 1886* (Reims: Matot-Braine, 1886). Both authors offer an uncompromising assessment of why this 'empire' was lost (the short-sightedness of the Bourbon monarchy) and posit Louis XV and his ministers as culpable for the existence of a British empire in India. School textbooks under the Third Republic similarly propagated this belief. For example, L.-H. Ferrand's *Géographie de la France et de ses colonies: Cours moyen – certificat d'études* (Paris: Cornély, 1904) attributes the loss of the French empire entirely to the recklessness of Louis XV (p. 75).
3. Das, *Myths and Realities of French Imperialism in India*, p. 72.
4. Vigié, 'La politique de Dupleix', p. 18.
5. The importance of the commercial relationship between India and France is exemplified by the definition of 'Inde' offered by Jaucourt in the *Encyclopédie ou dictionnaire raisonné*, where the entry opens with a geographical and commercial description of the subcontinent. Alembert and Diderot, *Encyclopédie ou dictionnaire raisonné*, vol. 8, pp. 660–2, on p. 660.
6. Colbert's comments are cited by Philippe Haudrère in a lengthy article which details the beginnings of France's trade, and that of its European rivals, with the Indies: P. Haudrère, 'Jalons pour une histoire des Compagnies des Indes', *RFHO*, 78 (1991), pp. 9–27, on p. 13. Vasco de Gama landed on the Indian coast in 1498 and the first Portuguese fort was built at Cochin in 1503; the Dutch Vereenigde Oost Indische Compagnie (VOC) was created in 1602, the Danish East India Company in 1616 and the Swedish East India Company over a century later in 1731.
7. The reasons for the delay between the establishment of the English and Dutch East India Companies and the French are discussed by Haudrère in *La Compagnie française au XVIII^e siècle*, vol. 1.
8. See P. Haudrère, 'La Compagnie des Indes', in P. Le Tréguilly and M. Morazé (eds), *L'Inde et la France: Deux siècles d'histoire commune, XVII^e–XVIII^e siècles: Histoire, sources, bibliographie* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 1995), pp. 11–21, on pp. 14–15.
9. Ibid., p. 14; and H. Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient, 1600–1800*, Europe and the World in the Age of Expansion, 2 (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), p. 230.
10. A.-M. Arnould, *De la Balance du commerce et des relations commerciales extérieures de la France dans toutes les parties du globe*, 2 vols (Paris: Buisson, 1791), vol. 1, p. 270.
11. P. Haudrère, 'Le Commerce', in Le Tréguilly and Morazé (eds), *L'Inde et la France*, pp. 23–31, on pp. 24–5.
12. C. L. Lokke, *France and the Colonial Question* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), p. 42.

13. P. Haudrère, 'The Compagnie des Indes Orientales', in R. Vincent (ed.), *The French in India: From Diamond Traders to Sanskrit Scholars*, trans. L. Padgaonkar (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1990), pp. 22–38, on p. 35.
14. Pierre Dardel provides compelling evidence of the steady increase in prosecutions, which rose from three in 1721 to sixty-three in 1737; see his *Les Manufactures de toiles peintes et des serges imprimées à Rouen et à Bolbec aux XVII^e^ et XVIII^e^ siècles* (Rouen: Desvages, 1940), p. 21.
15. Haudrère, 'Le Commerce', p. 29.
16. Voltaire, *Précis du siècle de Louis XV* (1763), in *Œuvres historiques*, ed. R. Pomeau, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris: Gallimard, 1962), pp. 1297–572, on p. 1507.
17. For example, the anonymous *mémoire* entitled 'Mémoire sur l'utilité de commerce de l'Inde à l'Etat' unequivocally advocates the suppression of the privileges of the Company, CAOM, $C^2$105.
18. Figures quoted by Das, *Myths and Realities of French Imperialism in India*, p. 41.
19. P. Haudrère, 'Quelques aspects du commerce', in Decraene (ed.), *Trois siècles de présence française en Inde*, pp. 109–22, on p. 110.
20. Das, *Myths and Realities of French Imperialism in India*, p. 41.
21. See, for example, the anonymous *mémoire*, *Etat Actuel de l'Inde, et considérations sur les établissemens et le commerce de la France dans cette partie du monde, sur les améliorations dont ils sont susceptibles, et sur la manière d'y faire le commerce* (London and Paris: Laurent Prault, 1787), which vociferously argues that trade with India was not only beneficial to the French nation, but a necessity, pp. 146–8.
22. Haudrère, 'Quelques aspects du commerce', p. 116.
23. Haudrère, 'The Compagnie des Indes Orientales', p. 26.
24. Malleson, *The History of the French in India*, p. 37.
25. [Société de l'histoire de l'Inde française], 'La Compagnie française des Indes', in *Revue historique de l'Inde française*, 7 vols (Pondichéry and Paris: n.p., 1919), vol. 3, p. 13.
26. J.-F. Law de Lauriston, *État politique de l'Inde en 1777*, ed. A. Martineau (Paris: Champion, 1913), p. 110.
27. Vigié, *Dupleix*, pp. 295–346, on pp. 338–40.
28. CAOM, $C^2$84; quoted in ibid., p. 446.
29. Vigié, 'La politique de Dupleix', p. 33. The Compagnie directors also resented Dupleix's personal profiteering from the gifts of Chanda Sahib and successive *subahdars*. An *arrêt* of June 1750 had forbidden Compagnie employees from accepting gifts from mogul dignitaries, ordering that they be put immediately into the Compagnie coffers. See Vigié, *Dupleix*, pp. 418–19. Since the publication of Jouveau-Dubreuil's biography of Dupleix in 1942, it has become *de rigeur* to characterize Dupleix's behaviour as that of a 'nabob'. See Jouveau-Dubreuil, *Dupleix ou l'Inde conquise*.
30. Voltaire, *Fragments sur quelques révolutions dans l'Inde*, p. 177.
31. P. Le Tréguilly, 'La présence française en Inde', in Le Tréguilly and Morazé (eds), *L'Inde et la France*, pp. 33–49, on p. 41.
32. Thomas Arthur de Lally de Tollendal was known under a variety of names with a variety of spellings (Lally-Tollendal, Lally-Tolendal, Lally). Following contemporaneous texts and the catalogue of the *Bibliothèque nationale de France*, this study will refer to him as 'Lally'.
33. Le Tréguilly, 'La présence française en Inde', p. 43.
34. Law de Lauriston, 'Observations sur l'état politique actuel de l'Inde' (February 1777), in *État politique de l'Inde en 1777*, p. 138.

35. Article 11 of the Treaty of Paris (10 February 1763), AD, vol. 5.
36. Das, *Myths and Realities of French Imperialism in India*, p. 90.
37. A. Martineau, 'Introduction', in Law de Lauriston, *État politique de l'Inde en 1777*, pp. 5–66, on pp. 29–30.
38. Le comte de Modave, *Voyage en Inde*, p. 48.
39. Le Tréguilly, 'La présence française en Inde', p. 46.
40. Such demands continued throughout the last years of the monarchy and the Directoire. As late as 1800, Commissaire de la Marine Launay cautioned that 'Le Département de la marine doit toujours se mettre en garde contre les charlatans qui lors qu'ils ont fait quelques séjours aux Indes se hatent de revenir en Europe les poches pleines de projets qui paroissent séduisants, dont l'exécution serait très difficile pour ne pas dire impossible' (The Department of the Marine must always be on its guard against charlatans who after a few sojourns in the Indies hasten back to Europe with their pockets full of projects which appear seductive but of which the execution would be very difficult if not to say impossible). Launay, 'Mémoire sur l'Inde' ([1800?]), AN: AE, $B^3$459.
41. See Chapter 2, below, pp. 32–40.
42. Quoted by C. Wanquet in his article 'Les îles Mascareignes, l'Inde et les Indiens pendant la révolution française', *RFHO*, 78 (1991), pp. 29–57, on p. 29.
43. For a discussion of this duality, see C. Wanquet, 'Révolution française et identité réunionnaise', *RFHO*, 76 (1989), pp. 35–74.
44. Treaty of Amiens (25 March 1802), AD, vol. 5.
45. Le Tréguilly, 'La présence française en Inde', p. 49.
46. Article 12 of the 'Premier Traité de Paris du 30 mai 1814', AD, vol. 5. Henceforth, in official parlance, these French territories were known as 'les Établissements français de l'Inde', but more popularly called 'les comptoirs'.
47. Voltaire, *Fragments sur quelques révolutions dans l'Inde*, p. 173.
48. Haudrère, 'Jalons pour une histoire des Compagnies des Indes', p. 18.
49. Das, *Myths and Realities of French Imperialism in India*, pp. 129–68.
50. For an overview of the strategic imperatives which informed French foreign policy in the eighteenth century, see J. Bérenger and J. Meyer, *La France dans le monde au XVIII^e^ siècle* (Paris: SEDES, 1993), pp. 13–27.
51. These conflicts contributed to what Meyer has called the 'second hundred years' war'. Meyer, 'The Second Hundred Years' War', p. 139.
52. M. Jasanoff discusses this trend in recent British historiography in her *Edge of Empire: Lives, Culture and Conquest of the East 1750–1850* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), p. 9.
53. E. Dziembowski's *Un nouveau patriotisme français, 1750–1770: La France face à la puissance anglaise à l'époque de la guerre de Sept Ans*, *SVEC*, 365 (1998) provides an excellent overview of the fluctuating levels of Anglophobia in post-1763 France.
54. As cogently demonstrated by Das, *Myths and Realities of French Imperialism in India*.
55. Turgot, *mémoire*, 6 April 1776, quoted in L.-P. de Ségur, *Politique de tous les cabinets de l'Europe pendant les règnes de Louis XV et de Louis XVI*, 3 vols (Paris: Buisson, 1802), vol. 3, pp. 172–82.
56. Equally, Vergennes did not demand any territory in North America on the conclusion of the treaties of Alliance and Commerce with the American rebels on 6 February 1778.
57. 'Mémoire de Vergennes à Louis XVI', 29 March 1784, quoted in Ségur, *Politique de tous les cabinets de l'Europe*, vol. 3, p. 201. The project for invading Egypt was popular in the last decade of the *ancien régime*, even making an appearance in Caraccioli's novel

of 1789, L.-A. de Caraccioli, *Lettres d'un Indien à Paris à son ami Glazir sur les mœurs françaises et sur les bizarreries du temps*, 2 vols (Amsterdam and Paris: Briand, 1789), vol. 2, p. 94.

58. The Treaty of Versailles was welcomed by the *porte-parole* of the Court in 1783. The *Gazette de France* applauded the restoration of safe, free and independent trade for the French in India, as guaranteed by the Treaty; *Gazette de France*, 89 (7 November 1783), p. 397.
59. Launay, 'Mémoire sur l'Inde' ([1800?]), AN: AE, B[3]459. See also the anonymous tract, possibly written by Le Brasseur, *De l'Inde, ou réflexions sur les moyens que doit employer la France relativement à ses possessions en Asie* (Paris: Didot l'aîné, 1790), p. 115.
60. 'Mémoire présenté au Directoire Exécutif, par le C*** Monneron, député extraordinaire des Établissements françaises, aux Indes Orientales' (1[er] Prairial, an 4 de la République [May 1796]), AN: AE, B[3]459.
61. Wanquet, 'Les îles Mascareignes', p. 43.
62. Napoleon Bonaparte to Tipu Saib, 7 Pluviôse, an VII, Asia, Pacific and Africa Collections, British Library, London, P/354/38.
63. Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire*, pp. 164–5; D. Forrest, *Tiger of Mysore: The Life and Death of Tipu Sultan* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1970), pp. 315–16.
64. Abraham Hyacinthe Anquetil Duperron's travels in India were, for example, motivated by the quest for Zoroastrian texts, while the astronomer Le Gentil, of l'Académie royale des sciences, made his initial journey to India to witness from Pondichéry the eclipse of the sun in 1761. See A. H. A. Duperron, *Voyage en Inde 1754–1762*, ed. J. Deloche, M. Filliozat and P.-S. Filliozat (Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, Maisonneuve et Larose, 1997); and M. Le Gentil, *Voyage dans les mers de l'Inde, fait par ordre du roi, à l'occasion du passage de Vênus sur le disque du soleil le 6 juin 1761, et le 3 du même mois, 1769*, 2 vols (Suisse: chez les Libraires associés, 1780). The growing French academic interest in India is further demonstrated by the establishment of l'École Spéciale des Langues Orientales under the auspices of Louis-Mathieu Langlès, Constatin-François de Volney and Antoine de Condorcet in 1795 and the creation of the first chair in Sanskrit at the Collège de France in 1815, held by Léonard de Chézy. R.-P. Droit, *L'oubli de l'Inde: Une amnésie philosophique*, 2nd edn (Paris: Éditions du Seuil [1989]), p. 113.
65. Florence D'Souza has identified 135 travellers in India between 1757 and 1818 who were either of French birth or French speaking. Unfortunately, this figure is far from complete, reliant as it is on those who left written accounts. F. D'Souza, *Quand la France découvrit l'Inde: Les écrivains-voyageurs français en Inde (1757–1818)* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1995), p. 11.
66. J.-M. Lafont, 'The French in Lucknow in the Eighteenth Century', in V. Graff (ed.), *Lucknow: Memories of a City* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 67–82, on p. 69. See also G. Bodiner, 'Les officiers français en Inde de 1750 à 1793', in Decraene (ed.), *Trois siècles de présence française en Inde*, pp. 69–90.
67. As reported by Louis Bourquien, a military adventurer who travelled to India to make his fortune, arriving in 1787; J. P. Thomson, 'An Autobiographical Memoir of Louis Bourquien (Translated from the French)', *Journal of the Punjab Historical Society*, 9 (1923), pp. 36–70, on pp. 68–9. Unfortunately, the original of this translated memoir has not been uncovered, despite extensive archival searches in France. For a succinct account of Wellesley's exploitation of the French threat in India, see Ingram, *Commitment to Empire*, pp. 189–91.
68. Wanquet, 'Les îles Mascareignes', p. 50.

69. J. Batbedat, 'In the Service of Indian Princes', in Vincent (ed), *The French in India*, pp. 96–121, on p. 114.
70. P. Le Tréguilly, 'Introduction', in Le Tréguilly and Morazé (eds), *L'Inde et la France*, pp. 7–8, on p. 7.
71. Sen, *The French in India*, p. 36; and Rapson, *The Struggle between England and France for Supremacy in India*, p. 4.
72. An argument propounded by Henry Scholberg and Emanuel Divien in their *Bibliographie des français dans l'Inde* (Pondichéry: Historical Society of Pondichéry, 1973), p. xiv.
73. In this respect the present work agrees with that of Das, *Myths and Realities of French Imperialism in India*.
74. For a thorough discussion of French reactions to the loss of Canada, which goes beyond the over-cited and waspish remark by Voltaire about 'quelques arpents de neige' (some acres of snow) (Voltaire, *Candide* (1759) in *Romans et contes*, ed. R. Pomeau (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1966), pp. 179–262, on p. 237), see Dziembowski's *Un nouveau patriotisme français*, pp. 253–62.
75. 'Le citoyen G. Bonnecarrere au Directoire Exécutif de la République française', 5 Messidor, an 5 (joint à la lettre du Ministre du 19 Messidor, an 5), AN: AE, $B^3$459.
76. Ministerial discussions of the military and political importance of India, for example, curiously make no reference to the declaration of the independent republic of Haiti on 1 January 1804. Indeed, the only reference to the Antilles occurs in the 'Mémoire présenté au Directoire Exécutif par le C*** Monneron ([May 1796]), where Monneron suggests that the French possessions in the West Indies were sufficiently large not to necessitate French expansion. AN: AE, $B^3$459.
77. Aubry, *Vraies causes de la perte de l'Inde, pour le comte de Lally contre Monsieur le Procureur-Général* (Paris: Simon, 1766), p. 5.

2 Constructing India as *Other*

1. S. Lévy, 'Préface', in A. Viollis, *L'Inde contre les Anglais* (Paris: Éditions des Portiques, 1930), pp. 7–10, on p. 7.
2. M.-L. Dufrenoy, *L'Orient Romanesque en France (1704–1789): Étude d'histoire et de critique littéraires*, 3 vols (Montreal: Éditions Beauchemin, 1946), vol. 1, p. 109. See also Petr, *L'Inde des romans*, pp. 138–40; and Assayag, *L'Inde fabuleuse*, pp. 43–56, 76–100.
3. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 4.
4. S. Murr, 'Les conditions d'émergence du discours sur l'Inde au Siècle des Lumières', in M.-C. Porcher (ed.), *Inde et littératures*, Collection Purusārtha, 7 (Paris: Éditions de l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 1983), pp. 233–84.
5. A. T. Embree, *Imagining India: Essays on Indian History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 14.
6. For a short but incisive analysis of French representations of India during the Renaissance, see E. Butterworth, 'India as Example in Renaissance Cosmographies and Montaigne', *Francophone Postcolonial Studies*, 3 (2005), pp. 16–28.
7. By 1690 the first letters from French Jesuits situated in Pondichéry had begun to circulate. See J.-M. Lafont, *Indika: Essays in Indo-French Relations 1630–1976* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2000), p. 33.

8. Abbé Prévost, *Histoire générale des voyages ou nouvelle collection de toutes les relations de voyages par mer et par terre*, 16 vols (Paris: Didot, 1746), vol. 1, p. 1.
9. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 4.
10. L. Lowe, *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 30.
11. A. Furetière, *Le Dictionnaire universel d'Antoine Furetière*, 3 vols (The Hague and Rotterdam: Leers, 1690), vol. 1, unpaginated. For a brief discussion of the development of the notion of 'civilization' in the eighteenth century, see L. Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), pp. 4–6. As Wolff demonstrates, both the Orient and Eastern Europe were placed in opposition, philosophically and culturally, to Western Europe.
12. See C. Weinberger-Thomas, 'Les yeux fertiles de la mémoire: Exotisme indien et représentations occidentales', and G. Bouchon, 'L'Image de l'Inde dans l'Europe de la Renaissance', both in C. Weinberger-Thomas (ed.), *L'Inde et l'imaginaire*, Collection Purusārtha 11 (Paris: Editions de l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 1988), pp. 9–31, 69–90, see pp. 10–11. Butterworth asserts in 'India as Example in Renaissance Cosmographies and Montaigne', and this study agrees, that France, as a result of its comparatively late trading and colonial expansionist interest in India, retained the older traditions and stories longer than its Portuguese and Florentine counterparts. For the development of travel writing on India in this period, see G. Deleury, *Le Voyage en Inde: Anthologie des voyageurs français (1750–1820)* (1991 as *Les Indes florissantes*; Paris: Laffont, 2003), pp. vii–xi; and D'Souza, *Quand la France découvrit l'Inde*, pp. 7–20.
13. C. Weinberger-Thomas, *Cendres d'immortalité: La Crémation des veuves en Inde* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1996), p. 95.
14. Ibid., p. 94.
15. Bhabha, 'The Other Question', p. 42.
16. Clifford's criticism of Said's mimicry of 'the essentializing discourse it attacks' is particularly notable: see J. Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 262. See also Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India*, p. 4; and Teltscher, *India Inscribed*, pp. 7–8.
17. See the Works Cited list, below. Florence D'Souza's research identifies 135 French or French-speaking travellers who published travel accounts on India over this period, a number supported by the present research. D'Souza, *Quand la France découvrit l'Inde*, p. 135.
18. Of the *recueils* published after 1754, volumes 27 and 28 both contain letters from Père Cœurdoux, while volumes 29 to 33 contain no letters on India. In addition, the final volume (34) contains a letter from Abbé Patouillet which details the bellicose attitudes of the Moors in India; *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses*, vol. 27 (1749), pp. 413–44, vol. 28 (1758), pp. 284–5, vol. 34 (1776), pp. 3–31.
19. 'La boulimie des textes indiens était d'ailleurs telle que les faux, Telliamed (1748; 1755), l'Ezour-Vedam (1778) servirent aussi intensément que les vrais' (The interest in Indian texts was such, moreover, that false texts, such as Telliamed (1748, 1755) and the Ezour-Vedam (1778), were used as intensively as real ones). J.-M. Lafont, 'Les Indes des Lumières, de 1610 à 1849', in F. Gros and F.-C. Constols (eds), *Passeurs d'Orient: Encounters between India and France*, trans. N. De Voogd (Paris: Ministère des affaires étrangères, 1991), pp. 13–33, on pp. 22, 23–4.
20. The importance of convention in determining the content of travelogues was identified as far back as 1978 by C. L. Batten in his *Pleasurable Instruction: Form and Convention*

in Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978), p. 4.

21. See Chapter 1, above, p. 18. The capitulation of the *comptoirs* during the Seven Years War, and the defeat of Lally's army in June 1761, left hundreds of nominally 'French' soldiers adrift on the subcontinent. Warren Hastings's assumption of the role of *diwan* (finance minister) of Bengal in 1774, and the attendant rights to raise taxes, marked the transformation of the East India Company from a trading company to a governing body.
22. Voltaire, *Dictionnaire philosophique* (1764; Paris: Gallimard, 1964), p. 38. The mendacity of fakirs is also used to illustrate religious dogmatism in the 'Dogmes' (p. 142) and 'Enthousiasme' (p. 177) entries; misplaced beliefs in 'Esprit faux' (pp. 178–9); and religious fraud in 'Fraude' (p. 198).
23. Anon., *Tableau historique de l'Inde contenant un abrégé de la mithologie et des mœurs indiennes, avec une description de leur Politique, de leur Religion, &c.* (Paris: A Bouillon, aux dépens de la société typographique, 1771), p. 50.
24. Ibid., p. 151.
25. Ibid., p. 161. In his 'Lettre d'un Turc', otherwise known as 'Bababec et les fakirs', Voltaire's satire is aimed not only at charlatan fakirs who delight in self-mortification and profit from such acts, but at all religious mysticism: see 'Lettre d'un Turc' (1750), in Voltaire, *Romans et contes*, pp. 119–21.
26. Like 'bayadère', 'caste' was Portuguese in origin. Père Cœurdoux, in the extensive research into Indian society which he compiled during his time as a missionary in India (1734–79), claims to have identified four principal castes and their subdivisions. His research was collated and edited by Nicolas-Jacques Desvaulx as *Mœurs et coutumes des Indiens* (1776–7), before the abbé Dubois passed if off as his own work and sold it to the East India Company in 1808. Published by the Company in English translation in 1816, it was used by the East India Company training college at Hertford Heath in a curious example of French ideas about India informing and shaping the British colonization of the subcontinent. Père G. L. Cœurdoux, *Mœurs et coutumes des Indiens: L'Inde philosophique entre Bossuet et Voltaire – I*, ed. S Murr (1777; Paris: École française d'extrême-orient, 1987), pp. 5–7, on p. 5. See G. Deleury and F. D'Souza, 'A Season of Lovers', in Vincent (ed.) *The French in India*, pp. 122–31, on pp. 129–30, for a history of the text.
27. Anquetil Duperron, *Voyage en Inde*, p. 194; Anon., *Tableau historique de l'Inde*, p. 49.
28. Le comte de Modave, *Voyage en Inde*, p. 372.
29. P. Sonnerat, *Voyage aux Indes Orientales et à la Chine, Fait par ordre du Roi, depuis 1774 jusqu'en 1781*, 2 vols (Paris: chez l'Auteur, 1782), vol. 1, p. 63.
30. J.-B. Milcent, *Azor et Zimeo, conte moral, suivi de Thiamis, conte indien* (Paris: Merigot jeune, 1776), p. 83.
31. [B.-J. Saurin], *Mirza et Fatmé, conte indien, traduit de l'Arabe* (The Hague: n.p., 1754), pp. 13–14.
32. Dufrenoy, *L'Orient Romanesque en France*, vol. 1, p. 150.
33. B. de Tezay, 'Le dernier cri du monstre, vieux conte indien' (1789), in M. Cook (ed.), *Contes révolutionnaires* (Exeter: University of Exeter, 1982), pp. 13–21; and A. L. Led*** [Ledrut], *Les Éléphants détronés et rétablis, Apologue historique indien dédié à S. A. R. Monsieur, frère du roi, lieutenant-général du royaume* (Paris: Michaud, 1814). Voltaire's *conte* 'Histoire d'un bon bramin' similarly uses thinly disguised Indian characters (a wise Brahmin priest and an old bigoted Indian woman) to question whether blissful

ignorance is a happier state than unsatisfied reason. Voltaire, 'Histoire d'un bon bramin' (1761), in *Romans et contes*, pp. 263–5.

34. C. de la Morlière, *Angola: Histoire indienne, Ouvrage sans vraisemblance* (1746), ed. J.-P. Sermain (Paris: Editions Desjonquères, 1991); [Saurin], *Mirza et Fatmé*; [L. Marcilly], *Zelindor et Zaïre. Traduction indienne, tirée du célebre auteur Indien Yn-Che-Cham* (The Hague: Chez Pierre Vander Aa, 1755); [N. Bricaire de La Dixmerie], *Le Livre d'Airain, Histoire indienne* (Paris: n.p., 1759); and S. de Boufflers, 'La reine de Golconde' (1761), in S. de Boufflers, *Contes*, ed. A. Sokalski (Paris: Société des Textes français modernes, 1995), pp. 173–206.
35. In *Mirza et Fatmé*, it is the actions of the 'Fée du malheur' (the bad fairy) which threaten the relationship between Mirza and Fatmé (p. 31), while the 'fée Lumineuse' (the luminous fairy) saves the young couple (p. 75). In *Angola*, it is the machinations of the 'fée Lumineuse' which precipitate the hero's life as a libertine (p. 38).
36. For a useful overview of the practice of using false publishing details on so-called 'philosophical books', often as a device for avoiding the censor, see F. Moureau, *La plume et le plomb: Espaces de l'imprimé et du manuscrit au siècle des Lumières* (Paris: Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2006), pp. 103–30. In the review that *L'Année littéraire* published of Dantu's *Zély ou la difficulté d'être Heureux, Roman Indien suivi de Aima et des Amours de Victorine et de Philogène* (1775; Paris: chez la veuve Duchesne, 1776), the reviewer contended that the *conte* lacked 'brilliancy' and was a pale imitation of Voltaire's early *Contes*. *L'Année littéraire*, 2 (1775), letter 8, pp. 289–305, on pp. 304–5.
37. F. de la Boullaye le Gouz, *Les Voyages et Observations du Sieur de la Boullaye Le-Gouz* (1653; Paris: n.p., 1657), p. 154.
38. F.-J.-M. Noël, *Dictionnaire de la Fable*, 4th edn, 2 vols (1801; Paris: Normant, 1823), vol. 2, pp. 43–4.
39. For a discussion of the frequency of the adjective 'voluptueux' and the noun 'volupté' in eighteenth-century accounts of India, with particular reference to the Indian woman, see Chapter 3, below, pp. 43–5.
40. J. Clifford, 'Introduction: Partial Truths', in J. Clifford and G. E. Marcus (eds), *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 1–26, on p. 23.
41. J. S. Bratton, 'Introduction', in J. S. Bratton, R. A. Cave, B. Gregory, H. J. Holder and M Pickering, *Acts of Supremacy: The British Empire and the Stage, 1790–1930* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), pp. 1–17, on p. 3.
42. D. M. Figueira discusses the Europe-wide success of *La Veuve du Malabar*, and parodies of it, in her 'Die Flambierte Frau: Sati in European Culture', in J. S. Hawley (ed.), *Sati, the Blessing and the Curse: The Burning of Wives in India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 55–72, on p. 61.
43. A.-M. Lemierre, *La Veuve du Malabar ou l'Empire des coutumes*, in J. Truchet (ed.), *Théâtre au XVIII[e] siècle*, 2 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 1974), vol. 2, pp. 779–832, V.vi, p. 832. The play is analysed more fully in Chapter 5, below, pp. 94–6.
44. See Chapter 5, below, pp. 99–104.
45. Alembert and Diderot, *Encyclopédie ou dictionnaire raisonné*, vol. 8, pp. 660–2, on p. 661. Zurac ends the first letter with the exhortation: 'Adieu divin ami, que *Parabram** te fasse un sort plus doux que le mien' (Adieu, my excellent friend. *Parabram* willing, you will have a more gentle fate than mine). The asterisk refers the reader to a footnote which claims that '*Parabram*, selon eux, c'est le Créateur' (*Parabram*, according to them, is the Creator). 'Parabram' may be a corruption of Abraham; it remains, however, that

the information contained in the footnote is untrue. Madame de *** [Benouville], *Les Pensées errantes, avec quelques lettres d'un Indien* (London and Paris: Hardy, 1758), p. 220.

46. [Benouville], *Les Pensées errantes*, p. 216.
47. Diderot, quoted in Voltaire, *Romans et contes*, p. 512.
48. Shastasid, in his response to Amabed's first letter, advises caution in dealings with the European invaders: 'Mon cher fils, je crains mortellement l'irruption des barbares d'Europe dans nos heureux climats' (My dear son, I mortally fear the irruption of these barbarians from Europe into our happy climes). *Les Lettres d'Amabed* (1763), in Voltaire, *Romans et contes*, pp. 513–58, on p. 515.
49. [Abbé Roubaud], *Le Politique Indien ou considérations sur les colonies des Indes orientales* (Amsterdam and Paris: Lacombe, 1768), p. 82.
50. Le comte Duprat, *Voyage du Comte Duprat dans l'Inde, écrit par lui-même* (London: n.p., 1780), pp. 3–4.
51. Law de Lauriston, 'Observations sur l'état politique actuel de l'Inde' (February 1777), in *État politique de l'Inde en 1777*. Law de Lauriston was Governor of Pondichéry from 11 April 1765 to 9 January 1777.
52. Law de Lauriston, *État politique de l'Inde en 1777*, p. 74.
53. Ibid., p. 75.
54. Ibid., p. 177.
55. British cruelties in Bengal were a particular feature of the *Journal encyclopédique* after 1769. See Chapter 6, below, pp. 125–7.
56. J.-H. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, *La Chaumière indienne*, in *Paul et Virginie et La Chaumière indienne* (1791; Paris: Curmer, 1838), pp. 314–420, on p. 321.
57. M. *** [Hapdé], *La Chaumière indienne; ou le paria, scènes équestres à grand spectacle, ornees de decors et costumes nouveaux; (sujet tiré des études de la nature) terminées par une fête de l'Indoustan: Divertissement analogue, jeux et usages de l'empire du Mogol* (Paris: Hocquet, 1811). The 'ballet' was performed for the first time at the *Cirque Olympique*, Paris, on 18 April 1811. In Mariana Starke's adaptation of Lemierre's *La Veuve du Malabar*, the liberating French general becomes a general of the English forces, and the universalizing civilizing mission of the French is subsumed under a Christian missionary narrative, with the final lines of the play exhorting that the Christian cross be fixed in all Hindu temples. M. Starke, *The Widow of Malabar, A Tragedy* (London: Barker, 1796), p. 47. For an overview of the reaction by British audiences to this version, see A. Chatterjee, *Representations of India, 1740–1840: The Creation of India in the Colonial Imagination* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1998), p. 113. While Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's *conte* is not particularly Anglophobic, its depiction of the caste system and pariahs was influential and could be fortuitously turned to Anglophobic ends. Stendhal, for example, in his *Souvenirs d'égotisme*, possibly written in 1832, compares the oppressive English class system to that of the castes in India, alluding to Bernardin de Saint-Pierre as his justification. Stendhal, *Souvenirs d'égotisme* (1832; Paris: Gallimard, 1983), p. 104.
58. The *Magasin encyclopédique* claimed that the novel 's'empare du cœur' (seized the heart); *Magasin encyclopédique*, 5:1 (1799), p. 420. For an analysis of the genealogy of *La Tribu indienne*, and the influence of the story of 'Inkle and Yarico' (a European saved by a 'savage' woman) during the eighteenth century, see C. A. Feilla's 'Introduction' to the new critical edition of *La Tribu indienne*, in *La Tribu indienne, ou Édouard et Stellina*, MHRA Critical Texts, 5 (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2006), pp. 1–24, on pp. 8–12.

59. Possibly Ceylon (Sri Lanka), although this is not made clear by the text itself.
60. L. Bonaparte, *La Tribu indienne, ou Edouard et Stellina*, 2 vols (Paris: Honnert, [1799]), vol. 2, pp. 222–3.
61. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 3.
62. Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 124–5.
63. It was not only India which was used to contrast competing colonial powers. In Madame de Monbart's *Lettres taïtiennes* (Paris: chez les Marchands des Nouveautés, [1784]), while the French corrupt the island of Tahiti politically and sexually, it is the arrival of English sailors which permanently damages the island culture, with their policy of 'divide and rule' irrevocably undermining Tahitian unity (pp. 124–5).
64. 'Traduction de la lettre Persanne présentée à la Reine, par les trois Ambassadeurs Indiens: Convention pour les artistes et ouvriers', AN: M, $B^3$803.
65. A. Hasan, *Palace Culture of Lucknow* (New Delhi: B. R. Publishing, 1983), pp. 377–8.
66. J.-B.-J. Gentil, *Mémoires sur l'Indoustan, ou l'Empire mogol* (Paris: Petit, 1822), p. 335.
67. It is worth noting that Tipu did not receive the 40 specialized foundry workers whom he had requested. The 'Etat nominatif des ouvriers & artistes qui doivent suivre MM les Ambassadeurs de Tippo-Sultan le Victorieux avec leur demeure actuelle' (which lists the workers who were to accompany the ambassadors on their return to Mysore) lists only a doctor, a surgeon, two watchmakers, two gardeners, two engineers, one cabinet-maker, five sheet manufacturers and two dyers. The other artisans followed separately. AN: M, $B^3$803.
68. According to the historian Michaud, Tipu was furious with the returning ambassadors and promptly had two of them executed; J.-F. [Michaud], *Histoire des progrès et de la chute de l'empire de Mysore sous les règnes d'Hyder-Aly et Tippoo-Saïb*, 2 vols (Paris: Giguet, 1801), vol. 1, p. 124.
69. The Minister for the Marine to M. Ruffin, 24 August 1788, AN: M, $B^3$803.
70. Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire*, pp. 149–76, esp. pp. 160–1.
71. [Michaud], *Histoire des progrès et la chute de l'empire de Mysore*, vol. 1, pp. 138–9. The former soldier Jean-Baptiste-Joseph Gentil, who had served in India and attended the reception for the ambassadors at Versailles, recalling the event in his memoirs, drew a similar conclusion to that of Michaud, surmising that 'L'arrivée de ces trois ambassadeurs à Paris, fut un spectacle pour les habitants de cette capitale, dont l'esprit naturellement porté à la nouveauté, fut plus frappé du costume oriental de ces étrangers, que de l'importance de la mission dont ils étaient chargés' (The arrival of these three ambassadors in Paris was a spectacle for the inhabitants of this capital; their minds naturally attracted to novelty, they were more struck by the oriental costumes worn by these foreigners than by the importance of the mission with which they were charged); Gentil, *Mémoires sur l'Indoustan*, p. 319. Needless to say, memoirs written over thirty years after the event and with the benefit of hindsight should be treated with caution. The extent to which Gentil's assessment resonates with that of Michaud (whom he directly quotes later in his account on p. 335) may suggest how far Michaud's description had come to be accepted as 'fact' rather than subjected to critical evaluation.
72. La Luzerne to M. Ruffin, 4 August 1788; AN: M, $B^3$803.
73. La Luzerne to M. Ruffin, 22 August 1788; AN: M, $B^3$803.
74. Anon., *Les Indiens ou Tippoo-Saïb, fils d'Hyder-Aly, &c. Avec quelques particularités sur ce Prince, sur ses Ambassadeurs en France, sur l'Audience qui leur a été donné par sa Majesté Louis XVI, à Versailles le 10 Août 1788; précédées du précis d'une partie de l'Administration*

de M. Hastings, &c.; et suivies de quelques détails relatifs aux événemens de la guerre de 1782 dans l'Inde, &c. &c. (London and Paris: Le Jay, 1788), p. 179.
75. Ibid., pp. 180–1.
76. 'De Versailles, le 13 Août 1788', *Gazette de France*, 66 (15 August 1788), p. 283.
77. M. Ruffin to La Luzerne, 30 August 1788, AN: M, $B^3$803.
78. Anon., *Les Indiens ou Tippoo-Saïb*, p. 195. This observation appears verbatim in the report 'De Versailles, le 13 Août 1788' provided by the *Gazette de France* (no. 66 (15 August 1788), p. 283), although this is unsurprising as the account of the audience offered by *Les Indiens ou Tippoo-Saïb* and that offered by the *Gazette de France* are identical.
79. Said, *Orientalism*, pp. 137–8.
80. Anon., *Les Indiens ou Tippoo-Saïb*, pp. 180, 184, 186.
81. In other words, as Suzanne Pucci argues with reference to Montesquieu's representations of otherness, the exotic brought 'objects as yet unresolved into a totalising myth of otherness to denote a particular Western attitude and psychological state'; S. R. Pucci, 'The Discrete Charms of the Exotic: Fictions of the Harem in Eighteenth-Century France', in G. S. Rousseau and R. Porter (eds), *Exoticism and the Enlightenment* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), pp. 145–74, on p. 147.
82. L. E. Vigée-Lebrun, *Souvenirs de Madame Vigée-Lebrun*, 3 vols (Paris: Fournier, 1835–7), vol. 1, p. 60.
83. Le comte F. de F. d'Hézecques, *Souvenirs d'un page de la Cour de Louis XVI*, reprinted edn (Brionne: Monfort, 1983), p. 234.
84. M. Ruffin to La Luzerne, 11 October 1788 (marked from Orléans), AN: M, $B^3$803.
85. M. Ruffin to La Luzerne, 29 October 1788 (marked from Brest), AN: M, $B^3$803.
86. T. Hallier, 'L'Ambassade indienne de 1788 au miroir d'Hérodote', *Francophone Postcolonial Studies*, 3 (2005), pp. 29–42, on p. 31.
87. K. Pomian, *Collectionneurs, amateurs et curieux. Paris, Venise: XVI^e–XVIII^e siècle*, Collection: Bibliothèque des Histoires (Paris: Gallimard, 1987), p. 74.
88. 'CURIEUX, EUSE. Adj. Qui a beaucoup d'envie et de soin d'apprendre, de voir' (CURIOUS, Adj. Of a person who has a great desire and need to learn, to see). Dictionary entry quoted in ibid., p. 72.
89. Nigel Leask's definition of the word 'curiosity' as employed by travel writers echoes Pomian's findings and is similarly dualist: 'The "curiosity" signalled in my title actually embraces two distinct senses of the word as it was employed in eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries discourses of travel ... The first is bound to a negative account of the wonder aroused by distant lands, associated with a socially exclusive desire to possess the "singular" object or else (especially in the later part of the period) a vulgar, popular interest in exotic objects for commercial profit. The second - employed more positively - denotes an inclination to knowledge which will lead the observer to a rational, philosophical articulation of foreign singularities.' N. Leask, *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing 1770–1840* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 4.
90. G. A. von Halem, *Paris en 1790: Voyage de Halem*, trans. A. Chuquet (Paris: Chailley, 1896), p. 246. Halem also notes the lascivious behaviour of the head ambassador, noting that '[il] avait-joui, dit-on, de grandes faveurs auprès des dames' (it is said that he has enjoyed great many favours from society ladies).
91. M. Brunet, 'Incidences de l'ambassade de Tippoo-Saib (1788) sur la porcelaine de Sèvres', *Cahiers de la Céramique*, 24 (1961), p. 281. Jasanoff notes that 'A button engraved with the profile of one of the ambassadors fetched almost £4,000 at auction at Christie's in June 2000'; Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire*, p. 359. The portrait of Dervich-Khan painted by

Louise Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun is discussed in Chapter 3, below, pp. 53–6. On the fetishization of the exotic object, analysed with reference to nineteenth-century literature, see C. Bongie, *Exotic Memories: Literature, Colonialism, and the Fin de Siècle* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), pp. 102–4. The commodification of the image of the ambassadors shows that the process which Bongie perceives at the height of empire in the nineteenth century was already apparent in the eighteenth.

92. Two of the most notable examples of this appropriation are Anon., *Conversation de Tipoo-Saib, avec son interprète* (Paris: n.p., 1788) and Anon., *Lettres de l'un des ambassadeurs de Typoo-Saïb, où il est beaucoup parlé des affaires du royaume de Gogo* (Paris: n.p., 1789).
93. For a recent discussion of Diderot's *Les Bijoux indiscrets* as a *roman à clef*, see S. Aravamudan, 'Talking Jewels and Other Oriental Seductions', in F. Ogée and A. Strugnell (eds), *Diderot and European Culture*, *SVEC*, 2006:09 (2006), pp. 15–34, on p. 16, n. 2, p. 17.
94. See, among others, Dufrenoy, *L'Orient Romanesque en France*, vol. 1, p. 212; and M. Cook, 'Introduction', in Cook (ed.), *Contes révolutionnaires*, pp. v–xiii, on p. xi.
95. The most famous example is Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes* (1721), but other works include Françoise de Graffigny's *Lettres d'une péruvienne* (1747) and Mme de Monbart's *Lettres taïtiennes* (1784). Voltaire's *L'Ingénu* (1767) similarly uses the literary device of an outsider commenting on French society, although it is not an epistolary novel, while Rousseau, in his 'Lettre à Christophe de Beaumont' (1763), adduces the example of a Parsee from Surat, condemned to death for refusing to convert to Islam after secretly marrying a Muslim, to criticize French religious intolerance. 'Jean-Jacques Rousseau, citoyen de Genève, à Christophe de Beaumont, Archevêque de Paris, Duc de St. Cloud, Pair de France, Commandeur de l'ordre de Saint Esprit, proviseur de Sorbonne' (18 novembre 1762), in J.-J. Rousseau, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. B. Gagnebin and M. Raymond (Paris: Gallimard, 1959–), vol. 4 (1763; 1969), pp. 927–1007, on pp. 980–3. For a recent synthetic overview of this literary device, see S. Romanowski, *Through Strangers' Eyes: Fictional Foreigners in Old Regime France* (West Lafayette, LA: Purdue University Press, 2005).
96. Caraccioli, *Lettres d'un Indien à Paris*, vol. 1, pp. 109, 134, 188, 261, 324, 328, 363, 395, vol. 2, pp. 32–3, 81, 129–30, 262, 297, 336–7. In Letter 53, addressed to his uncle Nadras, Zator notes: 'D'ailleurs, ils devrait être rassasies d'avoir vu nos Ambassadeurs, qui se promènent ici depuis du temps; mais il est impossible d'épuisé la curiosité des Parisiens; ils se multiplient, ils se reproduisent pour voir vingt fois le même objet' (Besides, they should be reassured having seen our Ambassadors, who have been walking around here for some time; but it is impossible to exhaust Parisians' curiosity; they come frequently and repeatedly to see the same object twenty times). The fictional observation corresponds with reports by Ruffin and other witnesses of the popularity of the ambassadors.
97. La Luzerne to M. Ruffin, second letter dated 4 August 1788, AN: M, B^{3}803.
98. La Luzerne to M. Ruffin, second letter dated 11 August 1788, AN: M, B^{3}803.
99. M. Ruffin to La Luzerne, 21 July 1788, AN: M, B^{3}803.
100. As Ros Ballaster observes, 'Some of the first European informants were jewel merchants such as Jean Chardin and Jean-Baptiste Tavernier who presented India as a kind of physical "fairyland" rich in minerals and precious stones'. Ballaster, *Fabulous Orients*, p. 267.
101. M. Ruffin to La Luzerne, 21 August 1788, AN: M, B^{3}803.
102. M. Ruffin to La Luzerne, second letter dated 24 August 1788, AN: M, B^{3}803.
103. M. Ruffin to La Luzerne, 23 August 1788, AN: M, B^{3}803.

104. M. Ruffin to La Luzerne, 20 October 1788 (marked from Nantes), AN: M, $B^3$803.
105. The ambassadors outstayed their welcome in Paris and it was with great difficulty that they were persuaded to leave. By October La Luzerne was irritated by the ambassadors' prevarications and the huge debts which they were creating. His letter of 7 October 1788 to Ruffin, which opens with the exclamation, 'Puissent, M, les ambassadeurs partir [pour] l'Inde!' (Monsieur, let the ambassadors leave [for] India!), provides a telling example of his annoyance; AN: M, $B^3$803. Jasanoff estimates that 'Tipu's embassy cost the French Crown over 800,000 *livres* (or about the same amount in contemporary pounds sterling)'; Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire*, p. 161.
106. Stories of the lingam particularly titillated travellers. Anquetil Duperron, for example, claims that at the temple of Tiruvakkarai he saw 'le lingam sur lequel les jeunes brahmines perdent leur virginité' (the lingam upon which young Brahmin women lost their virginity), even though the sexual use ascribed to the lingam did not exist in any Indian culture or religion. Anquetil Duperron, *Voyage en Inde*, p. 91. See also above, pp. 26–7.
107. Anon., *Les Indiens ou Tippoo-Saïb*, p. 186.
108. He is, for example, footnoted on pp. 1, 2 and 3 and quoted on p. 8.
109. Ibid., pp. vi–vii.
110. Compare 'Le commerce est fait pour être le lien des nations, pour consoler la terre, & non pour la dévaster. L'humanité & la raison avoient fait ces offres, la fierté & l'avarice les rejeterent' (Commerce is made to link nations, to bring comfort to the earth, & not to devastate it. Humanity and reason have offered this gift, pride & avarice have rejected it) (Anon., *Les Indiens ou Tippoo-Saïb*, p. 27) with abbé G.-T. Raynal's *Histoire philosophique et politique des deux Indes* (1780), ed. Y. Bénot (Paris: La Découverte, 2001), p. 15.
111. Anon., *Les Indiens ou Tippoo-Saïb*, p. 22. In her monograph *A Turn to Empire*, Jennifer Pitts examines Condorcet's posthumously published *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain* (1795). Drawing a clear link between the *mission civilisatrice* which was espoused under the Third Republic (post-1870), she concludes with the remark that 'The global future Condorcet presents in the "Tenth Epoch" [which he describes in the *Esquisse*] suggests a civilizing enterprise that might have looked something like the imperial liberalism of the decades to come, first among British liberals and then later in France: well-meaning, self-confident, and relatively intolerant of cultural difference'. *Les Indiens ou Tippoo-Saïb*, as with other texts written pre-1789 and explored further in Chapter 6 below (pp. 136–7), shows that a notion akin to the *mission civilisatrice* had its roots in philosophical thought which was current before 1789. J. Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France* (Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005), pp. 168–73, on p. 173.
112. Anon., *Les Indiens ou Tippoo-Saïb*, pp. 171–2. This account of the *bayadères* is analysed in Chapter 3, below, pp. 45–7.
113. A close examination of the correspondence between M. Ruffin and La Luzerne reveals that whatever the intentions of the Court had been at the outset, as the ambassadors prevaricated and postponed their departure the willingness to 'respect differences' declined. En route to Brest, Ruffin expresses exasperation at how long the journey is taking, adding: 'Elle [la route] ne vous paroitra point trop lente jusques ici, si vous daignes observer, Monseigneur, la difficulté de trouver rassemblés trente deux chevaux dans les postes, l'embarras de concilier les scrupules de nos Musulmans pour leur cuisine et leur répugnance à cheminer de nuit, et l'état de dépérissement d'Akbar Aly Khan' (Our journey would not appear at all slow up to this point, if you would consent to observe,

my Lord, the difficulty of assembling and readying thirty-two horses, the confusion of reconciling the Muslims' scruples about their food preparation and their repugnance for continuing their journey at night, and Akbar Aly Khan's weakening state). At the beginning of his involvement with the ambassadors, Ruffin had advocated tolerance ('Nous devons respecter le costume de ces étrangers' (We must respect the costume of these foreigners), 21 July 1788); now their foibles about food were just another in a long list of annoyances. M. Ruffin to La Luzerne, marked from Nantes, 20 October 1788, AN: M, B[3]803.

3 Emasculating India

1. Embree, *Imagining India*, p. 1.
2. A. Pagden, *European Encounters with the New World: From Renaissance to Romanticism* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1993), pp. 184–5.
3. Rajan, 'Feminizing the Feminine', p. 151.
4. Said, *Orientalism*, pp. 137–8.
5. G. C. Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in P. Williams and L. Chrisman (eds), *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), pp. 66–111. On the *sati*, see, particularly, L. Mani, 'Cultural Theory, Colonial Texts: Reading Eyewitness Accounts of Widow Burning', in L. Grossbert, C. Nelson, P. Treichler (eds), *Cultural Studies* (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 392–408, and her *Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998); P. Banerjee, *Widows, Witches, and Early Modern European Travellers in India* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); and Hawley (ed.), *Sati, the Blessing and the Curse*. On the female Indian in European culture and, particularly, French-language texts, see Figueira, 'Die Flambierte Frau'; M. Fludernik, 'Suttee as Heroic Martyrdom, Liebestod and Emblem of Women's Oppression: From Orientalist to Feminist Appropriations of a Hindu Rite in Four Narrative Genres', *Recherches anglaises et nord-américains*, 33 (2000), 'Le discours de la victime', pp. 145–80; Teltscher, *India Inscribed*, 'Indian Women: The Seventeenth-Century European Fantasy', pp. 37–73; and D. Underwood, 'Victime ou déesse sexualisée: La représentation de la femme indienne à l'époque coloniale de 1744 à 1930, étude des œuvres littéraires de langue française' (PhD thesis, University of Liverpool, 2004).
6. Keith Baker, developing the anthropological theories of Marshall Sahlins, has shown how new political discourses are fashioned from already-present symbolism: K. Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution: Essays on France's Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 4–7.
7. For an overview of the feminization of the subcontinent by imperial discourses, see Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India*, pp. 15–16.
8. L.-M. Langlès, *Fables et contes indiens, nouvellement traduits, avec un Discours préliminaire et des notes sur la religion, la littérature, les mœurs, &c. des Hindoux* (Paris: Royez, 1790), p. xlvi.
9. A. Fantin-Desodoards, *Révolutions de l'Inde pendant le dix-huitième siècle, ou Mémoires de Typoo-Zaeb, Sultan du Maissour, Écrits par lui-même, et traduit de la langue indoustane; publiées par Antoine Fantin-Desodoards, citoyen français*, 2 vols (Paris: Bridel, 1796), vol. 1, p. xiii. These 'memoirs' have been dismissed by Philippe Le Tréguilly and Monique Morazé as pure 'fantasy'; they were, however, viewed as authentic historical accounts by

contemporary readers. Le Tréguilly and Morazé (eds), *L'Inde et la France*, p. 192. For a discussion of this point, see Chapter 5, below.

10. L. Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984), p. 20.
11. See Chapter 2, above, pp. 26–7.
12. Ravi, 'Marketing Devi', p. 131; and J. Assayag, 'L'aventurier divin et la bayadère immolée. L'Inde dans l'opéra', in Weinberger-Thomas (ed.), *L'Inde et l'imaginaire*, pp. 197–227, on pp. 197–8.
13. É. de Jouy, *Les Bayadères, opéra en trois actes; poëme de M. Jouy, musique de M. Catel; ballets des premier et second actes, par M. Gardel, du troisième acte, par M. Milon; les décorations sont de M. Isabey. Représenté pour la première fois sur le théâtre de l'académie de musique, le 7 août 1810* (Paris: Roullet, 1821), 'Notice histroique', p. 7. The opera was staged with great success in Paris in 1810, at a time when Oriental spectacles were in vogue, with Napoleon Bonaparte attending one performance. Stendhal, in his *Souvenirs d'égotisme*, caustically comments upon Jouy's popularity with the Parisian theatre-going public before speculating about the true nature of Jouy's experiences with a *bayadère* in India. Stendhal, *Souvenirs d'égotisme*, pp. 135–8. For biographical information on Jouy, see Chapter 5, below, p. 178, n. 94.
14. Of the corpus of twenty travelogues examined in this study, a description of *bayadères* is included in nineteen.
15. P. Poivre, *Un Manuscrit inédit de Pierre Poivre: Les Mémoires d'un voyageur*, ed. L. Malleret, Publications de l'École française d'Extrême Orient, 65 (Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 1968), p. 90.
16. Ibid., p. 91.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Fludernik discusses the popularity of the theme of *sati* (and rescue from death on the pyre) in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European fiction and travelogues; see her 'Suttee as Heroic Martyrdom', p. 164.
20. Poivre, *Un Manuscrit inédit*, p. 91.
21. Anquetil Duperron, *Voyage en Inde*, p. 363.
22. Ibid.
23. J. Duncan and D. Gregory, 'Introduction', in J. Duncan and D. Gregory (eds), *Writes of Passage: Reading Travel Writing* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 1–13, on p. 4.
24. Batten, *Pleasurable Instruction*, p. 4.
25. G.-T. Raynal, *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissemens et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes*, 6th edn, 10 vols (1770; Neuchatel and Geneva: Libraires associés, 1783), vol. 2, book 4, ch. 9, pp. 114–18. Henceforth referred to as *Histoire des deux Indes*.
26. Ibid., vol. 2, book 4, ch. 9, p. 117.
27. Ibid.
28. Le Maistre de la Tour, *Histoire d'Ayder-Ali-Khan, ou Nouveaux mémoires sur l'Inde, enrichis de notes historiques*, 2 vols (Paris: Cailleau, 1783), vol. 1, p. 41.
29. Ravi, 'Marketing Devi', p. 133; and Deleury, *Le Voyage en Inde*, 'L'art séduisant des bayadères: Maistre de La Tour', pp. 753–5.
30. Le Maistre de la Tour, *Histoire d'Ayder-Ali-Khan*, vol. 1, pp. 44–5.
31. Anon., *Les Indiens ou Tippoo-Saïb*, pp. 171–2.

32. '[N]e dépareroient pas l'Opéra' in place of 'feroient plaisir sur le theatre de l'Opéra'; 'elles sont d'une incroyable légèreté, & ont le jarret aussi fort que souple' instead of 'elles sont très-légères & ont une très-fort jarret'.
33. Michaud, *Histoire des progrès et la chute de l'empire de Mysore*, vol. 1, p. 136. The critic Jackie Assayag, who quotes this passage second-hand, wrongly assumes that it is 'un témoignage' (an eyewitness account) of the *bayadères* rather than an attempt at historical analysis. See Assayag, *L'Inde fabuleuse*, p. 42.
34. Teltscher, *India Inscribed*, p. 37.
35. The most famous example of the subgenre is Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes* (1721). Louis-Antoine de Caraccioli (1719–1803) was a prolific author, although generally considered something of a hack rather than a true writer. Never the holder of a pension from the king, he produced works which were highly popular and, as in the case of the *Lettres d'un Indien*, translated into English. Moureau, *La plume et le plomb*, p. 93; and R. Darnton, 'The High Enlightenment and the Low-Life of Literature in Pre-Revolutionary France', *Past and Present*, 51 (1971), pp. 81–115, on p. 87.
36. Caraccioli, *Lettres d'un Indien à Paris*, vol. 1, p. 54.
37. Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 265–6.
38. See, for example, L. Moore, *Liberty: The Lives and Times of Six Women in Revolutionary France* (London: Harper Press, 2006), p. 56.
39. Caraccioli, *Lettres d'un Indien à Paris*, vol. 2, p. 487.
40. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 335.
41. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 336.
42. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 459.
43. Le Gentil, *Voyage dans les mers de l'Inde*, vol. 1, pp. 146. Le Gentil made his initial journey to India to witness the eclipse of the sun in 1761.
44. See note 5 above.
45. Banerjee, *Widows, Witches, and Early Modern European Travellers*, p. 73.
46. Anquetil Duperron, *Voyage en Inde*, p. 268.
47. E. Faguet, *Histoire de la poésie française: De la renaissance au romantisme*, 11 vols (Paris: Boivin, 1923–36), vol. 9: 'Les Poètes secondaires du XVIII[e] siècle (1750–1789)', p. 174.
48. Teltscher, *India Inscribed*, pp. 37–73.
49. D. Moginié, *L'Illustre Paisan ou mémoires et avantures de Daniel Moginié* (Lausanne: Verney, 1754), p. 230. In a three-page account of a *sati*, Sonnerat refers to 'la victime' (the victim) four times; Sonnerat, *Voyage aux Indes Orientales et à la Chine*, vol. 1, pp. 93–6. Voltaire's use of the *sati* in his anticlerical writings has long been established. In the *conte*, *Zadig ou la destinée* (1747), in which Zadig persuades the widow Almona not to carry out self-immolation, the act of *sati* is used for comic effect and romantic possibilities. This satire notwithstanding, Voltaire saw the act of *sati* as the perfect example of religious superstition, a view which is exemplified in his article 'Brachmanes, Brames' in the *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie par des amateurs* (1770–2); 'D'où vient que chez un peuple qui ne répandit jamais le sang des hommes, ni celui des animaux, le plus bel acte de dévotion fut-il & est-il encore de se brûler publiquement? La superstition qui allie tous les contraires, est l'unique source de cet affreux sacrifice' (From where does it arise, amongst a people who never shed the blood of men, nor that of animals, that the most beautiful act of devotion was, and is still, considered to be burning oneself alive publicly? Superstition, which allies all adversaries, is the only reason for this awful sacrifice). Voltaire, *Collection complette des œuvres de M. Voltaire*, 45 vols (Geneva: n.p., 1768–96), vol.

22: *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie* (1770–2), pp. 60–6, on p. 64. For a succinct discussion of European appropriations of *sati*, see Figueira, 'Die Flambierte Frau', p. 58.

50. A. Bonnaud, *La dégradation de l'espèce humaine par l'usage du corps à baleines* (Paris: n.p., 1770).
51. J.-J. Rousseau, *Émile ou De l'éducation* (1762; Paris: Poche, 1999), book 1.
52. A. Ribeiro, *Fashion in the French Revolution* (London: Batsford, 1988), pp. 34–5.
53. Le Gentil, *Voyage dans les mers de l'Inde*, vol. 1, p. 266.
54. A brief biography of Charles Stuart is contained in William Dalrymple's popular history *White Mughals: Love and Betrayal in Eighteenth-Century India* (London: Harper Perennial, 2004), pp. 42–4. Stuart's letters were anonymously reprinted in *The Ladies Monitor being a Series of Letters first published in Bengal, on the subject of Female Apparel, tending to Favour a Regulated Adoption of Indian Costume; and a Rejection of Superfluous Vesture, by the Ladies of this Country, with incidental remarks on Hindoo Beauty, Whale-Bone Stays, Iron Busks, Indian Corsets, Man-Milliners, Idle Bachelors, Hair-Powder, Side Saddles, Waiting Maids and Footmen* (London: for the author, 1809).
55. [Stuart], *The Ladies Monitor*, p. 14.
56. E. M. Collingham, *Imperial Bodies: The Physical Experience of the Raj, c. 1800–1947* (Cambridge: Polity, 2001), p. 38.
57. [Stuart], *The Ladies Monitor*, p. 21.
58. Ibid., pp. 16–17.
59. Ibid., pp. 76–7.
60. Ibid., p. 14.
61. Ibid., p. 153.
62. Stuart's is the only factual account to contrast French, English and Indian customs in a triangular discursive fashion, although Hamilton's *Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah* (1796), discussed in note 114 below, does set up a triangular contrast in a fictional representation.
63. The rivalry between Britain and France in continental Europe, and the impact that this had on the forging of a 'British' identity, has been examined by, among others, Derek Jarrett in his *The Begetters of Revolution: England's Involvement with France, 1759–1789* (London: Longman, 1973); Linda Colley in her *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1837* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1992); and G. Newman in *The Rise of English Nationalism: A Cultural History 1740–1830* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1997).
64. Anon., *Les Indiens ou Tippoo-Saïb*, p. 186; M. Ruffin to La Luzerne, 21 August 1788, AN: M, B^{3}803.
65. S. R. Kinsey, 'The Memorialists', in S. I. Spencer (ed.), *French Women and the Age of Enlightenment* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984), pp. 212–25, on p. 212.
66. See the discussion of the ambassadors' visit in Chapter 2, above, pp. 32–40.
67. Vigée-Lebrun, *Souvenirs*, vol. 1, p. 58.
68. Ibid.
69. See Chapter 2, especially the official exchanges regarding the ambassadors' dress, above, p. 32.
70. Vigée-Lebrun, *Souvenirs*, vol. 1, p. 60. The artist painted only two of the three ambassadors.

71. After Vigée-Lebrun had painted the queen, Marie-Antoinette, in a simple white chemise dress in 1783, the chemise (a muslin shift) became a popular female dress. See Moore, *Liberty*, pp. 9–10.
72. Vigée-Lebrun, *Souvenirs*, vol. 1, p. 59.
73. Ibid.
74. Leask, *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing*, p. 4. For a more comprehensive discussion of 'curiosity' with regard to the ambassadors, see Chapter 2, above, pp. 35–6.
75. Vigée-Lebrun, *Souvenirs*, vol. 1, p. 60.
76. Ibid.
77. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 61.
78. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 62.
79. M. Choudhury, 'Fact, Fantasy, or Mimesis? Narratives of Freedom/Imperial Masquerades', in L. J. Rosenthal and M. Choudhury (eds), *Monstrous Dreams of Reason: Body, Self, and Other in the Enlightenment* (London: Associated University Press, 2002) pp. 255–75, on p. 255.
80. The 'Etat nominatif du personnel attaché aux Ambassadeurs du Nabob Tipou Sultan, qui som de leur Religion' includes, in addition to the servants of the individual ambassadors, eight *Sipais*, two *écrivains*, four *porteurs de batons de bois* and four *porteurs de batons d'argent*, AN: M, B[3]803.
81. Vigée-Lebrun, *Souvenirs*, vol. 1, p. 161.
82. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 56. In the 'édition féministe' edited by Claudine Herrmann and published by Des femmes, an endnote helpfully points out to the reader that 'Le mari avait alors en effet l'administration absolue des gains de la femme, excepté si elle était marchand' (Husbands then effectively had absolute control over their wives' incomes, unless they were tradeswomen). L. E. Vigée-Lebrun, *Souvenirs I: Une édition féministe*, ed. C. Herrmann (Paris: Des femmes, n.d.), p. 348, n.
83. Vigée-Lebrun, *Souvenirs*, vol. 1, p. 62. The painting of Dervich-Khan now forms part of the Marnier-Lapostolle Collection held in France. It is not on public display.
84. G. Dow, 'The British Reception of Madame de Genlis's Writings for Children: Plays and Tales of Instruction and Delight', *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 29 (2006), pp. 367–81, on p. 370. The novel was later published in English as *Tales of the Castle, or Stories of Instruction and Delight*, trans. T. Holcroft (London: n.p., 1784).
85. S.-F. de Genlis, *Les veillées du château, ou cours de morale à l'usage des enfants*, 3 vols (1782; Paris: Michel Lambert, 1786), vol. 1, p. xiv. For a biography of Stéphanie-Félicité de Genlis (1746–1830), and discussion of her motivation to write, see G. Dow, 'Reviewing Madame de Genlis: "Gouverneur", "Mère de l'Eglise", "Hypocrite"' (DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2004).
86. The work, in fact, was largely ignored by critics, with short reviews appearing in only the *Journal encyclopédique*, 5:1 (July 1784), pp. 474–85, and 6:1 (August 1784), pp. 58–70; and *L'Année littéraire*, 1 (January 1786), pp. 193–220. See Dow, 'The British Reception of Madame de Genlis's Writings for Children', p. 373.
87. Genlis, *Les veillées du château*, vol. 2, p. 140.
88. For an informative account of Mme de Genlis's acrimonious relationship with the *philosophes*, see R. Trousson, 'Madame de Genlis et la propagande antiphilosophique', in *Robespierre & Co.*, Terzo seminario internazionale di Bagni de Lucca, November 1987 (Bologne: CLUEB Editrice, 1988), pp. 209–43.
89. Genlis, *Les veillées du château*, vol. 1, p. 455, vol. 2, p. 138.

90. The visit by Alphonse and Thélismar to the Mogol's court is not the first time that a reference to India appears in Mme de Genlis's novel. In one of the 'daytime' interludes, the abbé uses the example of the 'Naïres' (who, he claims, are a tribe of nobles who live on the Malabar coast) to illustrate his assertion that generosity is 'une virtue si naturelle' (such a natural virtue) that it can be found even 'chez les nations les moins policiées' (in the most uncivilized nations). The reader is informed in a footnote that this information can be found in *L'Histoire générale des voyages*, 'abrégée par M. de la Harpe, tome 5, page 130'; Genlis, *Les veillées du château*, vol. 1, p. 83 n. Such a casual use of the exemplar of Indians gives some indication of the more widespread employment of India as a cultural reference point.
91. Genlis, *Les veillées du château*, vol. 2, pp. 52–3.
92. The unpublished journal of Louis Bourquien, a mercenary who travelled to India at the end of the eighteenth century, provides a salient example of this belief in the vastness of India: 'I saw open before me the most magnificent career of glory and military fame. On one side, I could stretch my hand to Tibet, on the other, the Princes of Lahore and Kashmir invited me to enter their States and to join forces with them ... Already I transported myself in my imagination to the highest peak of the Caucasus, and descried the fertile plains watered by the Nile, where lately waved the banners of the French and I heard the echoes of those famous mountains repeat the name of Bonaparte. Vain hopes ... vain schemes ....' Thomson, 'An Autobiographical Memoir of Louis Bourquien', p. 52. Ros Ballaster alludes to the contemporary association of wealth and jewels with India: 'Some of the first European informants were jewel merchants such as Jean Chardin and Jean-Baptiste Tavernier who presented India as a kind of physical "fairyland" rich in minerals and precious stones'. Ballaster, *Fabulous Orients*, p. 267.
93. Genlis, *Les veillées du château*, vol. 2, p. 52 n.
94. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 138.
95. G. Kelly, *Women, Writing, and Revolution 1790–1827* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 132–3.
96. Genlis, *Les veillées du château*, vol. 2, p. 59 n.
97. 'Together with its attendant vocabulary – cruelty, tyranny, oppression – this [despotism] was widely supposed to be the defining characteristic of oriental government'. Teltscher, *India Inscribed*, p. 163.
98. Genlis, *Les veillées du château*, vol. 2, p. 53.
99. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 9.
100. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 57.
101. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 542.
102. India was treated with great respect by Voltaire because of his perception of the antiquity of Indian arts. For a discussion of Voltaire's hierarchy of nations, see M. L. Perkins, *Voltaire's Concept of International Order*, *SVEC*, 36 (1965), p. 33.
103. [Benouville], *Les Pensées errantes*, pp. 3, 213.
104. Ibid., pp. 7, 8–9.
105. Ibid., pp. 12–13.
106. Ibid., p. 164.
107. Ibid., pp. 164, 165.
108. Ibid., p. 167.
109. On the trope of the harem in eighteenth-century European literature, see Pucci, 'The Discrete Charms of the Exotic'.
110. Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India*, p. 77.

111. [Benouville], *Les Pensées errantes*, p. 212.
112. Ibid.
113. Ibid., p. 217 n.
114. Elizabeth Hamilton's *Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah* (1796) was a highly popular epistolary novel which saw five editions published between 1796 and 1811. In recent years it has received substantial critical attention, not only in terms of its contribution to Western imaginative constructions of India (as examined by Kate Teltscher), but also from feminist and postcolonial critics (notably Gary Kelly, Nigel Leask and Blachandra Rajan). See Teltscher, *India Inscribed*, pp. 138–42; Kelly, *Women, Writing, and Revolution 1790–1827*, pp. 126–64; Leask, *British Romantic Writers and the East*, pp. 101–4; and Rajan, 'Feminizing the Feminine', pp. 149–72.
115. See Chapter 2, above, p. 24.
116. O. de Gouges, *Zamore et Mirza; ou l'heureux naufrage, drame indien en trois actes, et en prose*, in *Œuvres de Madame Degouge*, 3 vols (Paris: Cailleau, 1788), 3 vols (Paris: Cailleau, 1788), vol. 3, pp. 1–91. Olympe de Gouges (pseudonym of Marie Gouze; 1748–93) was the prolific author of pamphlets and other works, all of dubious quality. As the author of *Déclaration des droits de la femme et de la citoyenne* (1791), she has been chiefly remembered by historians as an early champion of women's rights, although the pamphlet was largely overlooked by her contemporaries. For more biographical details, see R. Trousson's 'Introduction' to Gouges's *Mémoire de Madame de Valmont* (1788), in R. Trousson (ed.), *Romans de femmes du XVIIIe siècle* (Pars: Laffont, 1996), pp. 477–87.
117. E. Showalter, Jr, 'French Women Dramatists of the Eighteenth Century', in *Transactions of the Seventh International Congress on the Enlightenment*, *SVEC*, 264 (1989), pp. 1203–4, on p. 1203. Showalter observes that only four women during the eighteenth century 'succeeded in having a full-length play produced at the Comédie-Française: Marie-Anne Barbier, Madeleine-Angélique Poisson de Gomez, Anne-Marie Du Bocage, and Françoise de Graffigny'. Neither this nor the extended version of the paper (which appears in *Yale French Studies*) mentions Olympe de Gouges's play. E. Showalter, Jr., 'Writing off the Stage: Women Authors and Eighteenth-Century Theater', *Yale French Studies*, 75 (1988): 'The Politics of Tradition: Placing Women in French Literature', pp. 95–111.
118. A. Striker briefly describes the riot which broke out at the Théâtre de la Nation on the opening night of *L'Esclavage des noirs, ou l'heureux naufrage*, and the surrounding political context: see 'Spectacle in the Service of Humanity: The Negrophile Play in France from 1789 to 1850', *Black American Literature Forum*, 19:2 (1985), pp. 76–82, on pp. 76–7.
119. See Trousson, 'Introduction', p. 479.
120. For a detailed narrative of the performance and publication history of the play, see G. S. Brown, 'The Self-Fashionings of Olympe de Gouges, 1784–89', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 34 (2001), pp. 383–401.
121. Gouges, *Zamore et Mirza*, vol. 3, p. 23. Gregory S. Brown explores Gouges's invocation of gender as an act of 'self-fashioning' and, in doing so, successfully counters scholarship of the 1990s which presents Gouges as the first French feminist and a 'militant abolitionist'. See Brown, 'The Self-Fashionings of Olympe de Gouges', pp. 388–91.
122. The performed version of the play was published in 1792; it is this later printed edition which has attracted considerable scholarship, contributing to Gouges's current reputation as an ardent abolitionist. Maryann DeJulio, in her introduction to her own translation of the 1792 edition of the play, and Marie-Pierre Le Hir both read the play as

an abolitionist one and as an extension of Gouges's feminism. See M. DeJulio, 'On Translating Olympe de Gouges', and M.-P. Le Hir, 'Feminism, Theater, Race: *L'Esclavage des Noirs*', both in D. Y. Kadish and F. Massardier-Kenney (eds), *Translating Slavery: Gender and Race in French Women's Writing, 1783–1823* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1994), pp. 125–32, 65–83.

123. Consider *contes* such as [Marcilly], *Zelindor et Zaïre*; [Bricaire de La Dixmerie], *Le Livre d'Airain*; Boufflers, 'La reine de Golconde' (1761), pp. 173–206; Morlière, *Angola: Histoire indienne*; and, particularly, [Saurin], *Mirza et Fatmé*, with whose hero Gouges's shares a name. The use of 'indien' as a synonym for 'libertine' is discussed in Chapter 2, above, pp. 26–7.
124. Gouges, *Zamore et Mirza*, 'Personnages', unpaginated.
125. Article 11 of the Treaty of Paris (1763) returned Pondichéry, Karikal, Mahé, Yanaon and Chandernagor to French control, AD, vol. 5.
126. Gouges concludes her 'Préface de Zamor [*sic*] et Mirza' by stating that 'c'est l'Histoire des Nègres que j'ai traité dans ce Drame, & que la Comédie m'a forcé à défigurer par le costume & la couleur, & qu'il m'a fallu substituer des Sauvages; mais que cet inconvénient ne peut pas faire prendre le change à l'histoire déplorable de ces infortunés qui sont des hommes comme nous, & que l'injustice du sort à mis au rang des brutes' (it is the History of Negroes that I dealt with in this Drama, & that the Comédie forced me to disfigure by costumes & colour, & who made me substitute Savages; but this inconvenience cannot devalue the deplorable story of these unfortunates who are men like us, & whom the injustice of fate has lowered to level of brutes). She follows the text of the play with her 'Réflexions sur les Hommes Nègres'; Gouges, *Zamore et Mirza*, vol. 3, pp. 1–23, on pp. 21, 92–9.
127. For a discussion of the treatment of East Indian slaves in the French Indian Ocean, see D. Scarr, *Slaving and Slavery in the Indian Ocean* (London: Macmillan, 1998), esp. pp. 18–59.
128. Raynal, *Histoire des deux Indes*, ed. Bénot, pp. 173, 175 (entry written by Diderot and Pechmeja).
129. For a comprehensive discussion of the ambiguities of the term 'nègre', the slippages in defining peoples geographically, by appearance or by their status as slaves, and the tightening up of such definitions in the mid-eighteenth century, see S. Peabody, *'There Are No Slaves in France': The Political Culture of Race and Slavery in the Ancien Régime* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 57–71, on pp. 60–1. The frequency and associations of terms such as 'nègre' and 'noir' are also charted by Serge Daget in his 1973 article which systematically enumerates and documents the uses of 'esclave', 'nègre' and 'noir' by abolitionist writers between 1770 and 1845; S. Daget, 'Les mots esclave, nègre, noir, et les jugements de valeur sur la traite négrière dans la littérature française de 1770 à 1845', *RFHO*, 60 (1973), pp. 511–48, on pp. 516–17.
130. Gouges, *Zamore et Mirza*, vol. 3, p. 91.
131. M. Starke, *The Sword of Peace; or, A Voyage of Love* (1789), in P. J. Kitson and D. Lee (eds), *Slavery, Abolition and Emancipation: Writings in the Romantic Period*, 8 vols (London: Pickering & Chatto, 1999), vol. 5: J. N. Cox (ed.), 'Drama', pp. 120–99. Cox comments on this confusion in his brief introduction, pp. 129–30, on p. 130.
132. Anon., *Etat Actuel de l'Inde*, p. 1.
133. Brown, 'The Self-Fashionings of Olympe de Gouges', p. 392.
134. Gouges, *Zamore et Mirza*, vol. 3, p. 6.

135. S. Maza, 'Domestic Melodrama as Political Ideology: The Case of the Comte de Sanois', *The American Historical Review*, 94 (1989), pp. 1249–64, on p. 1261.
136. Gouges, *Zamore et Mirza*, vol. 3, p. 4.
137. In I.vii and II.ii; see Brown, 'The Self-Fashionings of Olympe de Gouges' p. 393.
138. O. de Gouges, *L'Esclavage des Noirs* (1792), in Kadish and Massardier-Kenney (eds), *Translating Slavery*, pp. 232–65, on p. 235.
139. Brown, 'The Self-Fashionings of Olympe de Gouges', p. 393.
140. Gouges, *L'Esclavage des Noirs*, p. 235.
141. Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India*, pp. 15–16.

4 Mythical India

1. P. J. Marshall and G. Williams, *The Great Map of Mankind: British Perceptions of the World in the Age of Enlightenment* (London: Dent, 1982), p. 155.
2. See Chapter 5, below, pp. 86–93.
3. Holwell's work was favourably reviewed in the *Journal encyclopédique*, 2:2 (March 1769), pp. 202–16. For an assessment of the influence of Holwell's text on Voltaire, see D. S. Hawley, 'L'Inde de Voltaire', in *SVEC*, 120 (1974), pp. 139–78, on pp. 145–7; and for a consideration of La Harpe's use of Holwell, see C. Todd, 'Two Lost Plays by La Harpe: *Gustave Wasa* and *Les Brames*', in *SVEC*, 62 (1968), pp. 151–272, on pp. 159–60.
4. The first two volumes were published in 1768 and appeared in French translation in 1772. A third volume was published in 1772 and appeared in French in 1779.
5. Teltscher, *India Inscribed*, pp. 202–20, on p. 202; and A. L. Wilson, *A Mythical Image: The Ideal of India in German Romanticism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1964), pp. 69–79.
6. Said, *Orientalism*, p. 21. Said's orthodoxy, despite being thirty years old, still informs much cultural criticism. See Introduction, above, p. 5.
7. Said, *Orientalism*, pp. 31–49.
8. Franklin makes a similar point about what he calls the 'intricate interplay of Western and Indian discourses in the "contact zone" of Bengal'. Franklin, 'General Introduction', p. 15. For a biographical account of Raymond, see W. H. Carey, *The Good Old Days of Honourable John Company*, 2 vols (Calcutta: Cambray, 1907), vol. 2, p. 238, Jasanoff offers a comprehensive overview of Claude Martin's activities as a collector in her *Edge of Empire*, pp. 71–7. Polier's posthumous work, *Mythologie des Indous; travaillée par M^dme^ La Ch^nsse^ de Polier, sur des Manuscrits authentiques apportés de l'Inde par feu Mr. Le Colonel de Polier, membre de la Société Asiatique de Calcutta*, 2 vols (Roudolstadt and Paris: Schoell, 1809), made extensive use of the sources which he had collected over the course of his lengthy stay in India.
9. R. Inden, *Imagining India* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), p. 86.
10. R. Gildea, *The Past in French History* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 12.
11. In her 1992 work, *Myths and Realities of French Imperialism in India*, Das argues that the 'prevailing belief that the French conflict with the English in India was uniquely a conflict for an "Indian Empire" may now be revealed for what it always was, a myth' (p. 292).
12. A.-G. C. d'Orville, *Histoire des différens peuples du monde contenant les cérémonies religieuses et civiles, l'origine des religions leurs sectes et superstitions et les mœurs et usages de*

chaque nation, 6 vols (Paris: Hérissant fils, 1770–1); J. R. Sinner, *Essai sur les dogmes de la Métempsychose et du Purgatoire enseignés par les Bramins de l'Indostan* (Berne: Société typographique, 1771); Langlès, *Fables et contes*; and Polier, *Mythologie des Indous*.

13. As demonstrated by the claim in the preface to Prévost's sixteen-volume compendium of travel writing, knowledge was presented as total. Prévost, *Histoire générale des voyages*, vol. 1. p. 1. Consider also Anon., *Tableau historique de l'Inde*; and Sonnerat, *Voyage aux Indes Orientales et à la Chine*, vol. 1, pp. 149–304.
14. Poivre, *Un Manuscrit inédit*, p. 86.
15. Anon., *Tableau historique de l'Inde*, p. 184. For the 'invention of Hinduism', see R. King, *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India and 'the Mystic East'* (New York: Routledge, 1999); and Inden, *Imagining India*.
16. Anon., *Tableau historique de l'Inde*, pp. 196–7.
17. See Chapter 4, below, pp. 74–7. For a discussion of the surge of documents and manuscripts which were accumulated in the Bibliothèque royale during the 1770s and 1780s, see Lafont, 'Les Indes des Lumières' pp. 23–4. Filliozat calculates that Père Pons had sent 168 Sanskrit texts to the Bibliothèque royale in Paris before the suppression of the Jesuit order in France (1764); J. Filliozat, 'Deux cents ans d'Indianisme: Critique des méthodes et des résultats', *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient*, 76 (1987), p. 86. The importance of Hindu texts as a source of academic enquiry is also suggested by four important papers presented at the Académie des Inscriptions et de Belles-Lettres: Alexandre Jean Vincent Mignot's 'Quatrième mémoire sur les anciens Philosophes de l'Inde. Exposé de la doctrine des anciens Philosophes de l'Inde, et comparaison de cette doctrine avec les Philosophes d'autres pays', *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 31 (1762), pp. 212–62, and his 'Cinquième mémoire sur les anciens Philosophes de l'Inde. Suite de l'exposé sur la doctrine des anciens Philosophes de l'Inde et de la comparaison de cette doctrine avec celle des Philosophes des autres pays', *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 31 (1762), pp. 263–338; J. de Guignes's 'Réflexions sur le livre indien intitulé Bhagavadam', *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 38 (1772), pp. 312–36, and his 'Recherches historiques sur la religion indienne, et sur les livres fondamentaux de cette religion, qui ont été traduits de l'Indien en Chinois. Premier mémoire. Etablissement de la religion Indienne dans l'Inde, la Tartarie, le Thibet et les Isles', *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 40 (1776), pp. 187–247.
18. Langlès argues that the Indians will be truly understood only if their literature is read: 'Les Indiens sont si intéressans, et cependant si peu connus, qu'il suffit de cultiver la littérature pour saisir avec empressement tout ce qui vient de ce peuple antique, savant et malheureux' (The Indians are so interesting, and nevertheless so little known, that it suffices to cultivate swiftly their literature and all that comes from this ancient, knowledgeable and unfortunate people). Langlès, *Fables et contes indiens*, p. iii.
19. [C. Malte-Brun], Le Rédacteur, 'Sur l'infanticide chez les Hindous et chez quelques autres nations', *Annales des voyages, de la géographie et de l'histoire*, 17 (1812), pp. 99–109, on 102–3.
20. Langlès, *Fables et contes indiens*, p. x.
21. Ibid., p. xlvi; quoted in Chapter 3, above, p. 52.
22. Voltaire, *Essai sur les mœurs et l'esprit des nations, I–IV* (1756–78), in *Œuvres de Voltaire*, ed. M. Beuchot, 72 vols (Paris: Lefèvre, 1829–34), vols 15–18, part I, vol. 15, p. 295. In this definition Voltaire distinguishes between the ancient Brachmanes and the Brahmins, whom he presents as the Brachmanes' degenerate successors.

23. 'Qu'il me soit permis d'appuyer un système que M. *de Voltaire* a conçu avant moi, et dont je me suis pénétré non seulement par la lecture des ouvrages de ce grand écrivain, mais encore par mes études sur les auteurs grecs et orientaux. Je crois, comme lui, que les Chinois et les Eygptiens sont les écoliers des Indiens, chez lesquels ils allerent puiser les sciences et les arts' (Permit me to apply the system that Mr *de Voltaire* conceived of before me, and which I have come to understand not only by reading the works of this great writer, but even more by my own studies of Greek and Oriental authors. I believe, like him, that the Chinese and the Egyptians were the pupils of the Indians to whom they travelled in order to find the sciences and the arts). Langlès, *Fables et contes indiens*, p. iv, n. (*a*).
24. For an overview of contemporaneous critical reaction to La Harpe's tragedy, see H. C. Lancaster, *French Tragedy in the Reign of Louis XVI and the Early Years of the French Revolution* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1953), pp. 41–4.
25. For an outline of the plot of the play, see Chapter 5, below, p. 94.
26. For biographical details of La Harpe's stay with Voltaire in Ferney, see Assayag, *L'Inde fabuleuse*, pp. 76–80.
27. A. Dow, 'A Dissertation Concerning the Customs, Manners, Language, Religion and Philosophy of the Hindoos', in *The History of Hindostan translated from the Persian*, 3 vols (1768–72), in M. J. Franklin (ed.), *Representing India: Indian Culture and Imperial Control in Eighteenth-Century British Orientalist Discourse*, 9 vols (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), vols 2–3, vol. 2, pp. xix–lxxvi, on pp. xxv–xxvi; and Raynal, *Histoire des deux Indes*, vol. 1, pp. 46–8. Todd gives a good overview of this critical debate; see 'Two Lost Plays by La Harpe', p. 158. Given Voltaire's respect for Dow's work, and the fact that La Harpe, a disciple of Voltaire, had in his possession a translation of Dow's work when he died, it seems more likely that the English-language work was his source.
28. La Harpe, *Les Brames*, I.i, and I.iii, in Todd 'Two Lost Plays by La Harpe', pp. 205, 212.
29. Ibid., I.i, p. 205; I.iv, p. 214; V.ii, p. 264; and V.iii, p. 267.
30. Ibid., I.i, p. 204; Voltaire, *Fragments sur quelques révolutions dans l'Inde*, p. 226; Voltaire, *Précis du siècle de Louis XV*, p. 1467; and Voltaire, *Essai sur les mœurs*, part I, vol. 15, p. 282–3, 289. For a discussion of Voltaire's interpretation of India's ancient history, see Chapter 5, below, pp. 88–92.
31. La Harpe, *Les Brames*, III.iii, pp. 234–5. Voltaire, *Essai sur les mœurs*, part I, vol. 15, pp. 295–6.
32. As identified by Lancaster in *French Tragedy*, p. 43 n. 36.
33. Napoleon himself attended the first performance; Assayag, *L'Inde fabuleuse*, p. 53.
34. Jouy, *Les Bayadères*, III.vii, p. 63. The opera was performed for the first time in the *académie de musique* (Paris) on 7 August 1810.
35. Jouy, *Les Bayadères*, 'Notice historique', p. 5. Assayag erroneously claims that the opera features a character called king Devendren when, in fact, Jouy calls his rajah Demaly and cites the legend of Devendren as inspiration. Binita Mehta, who relies heavily on Assayag, makes a similar assertion. See Assayag, *L'Inde fabuleuse*, pp. 53–4; and B. Mehta, *Widows, Pariahs and Bayadères: India as Spectacle* (London: Associated University Presses, 2002), p. 51.
36. Jouy, *Les Bayadères*, 'Notice historique', p. 7.
37. 'Les trois divinités principales de la mythologie indienne' (The three principal divinities in Indian mythology), Jouy, *Les Bayadères*, I.v, p. 30 n. This explanation, of course, conflates 'Hindu' with 'Indian'.
38. Jouy, *Les Bayadères*, 'Notice historique', p. 12.

39. Jouy, *Les Bayadères*, III.viii, p. 65.
40. A. Rogerius, *Le Théâtre de l'idolatrie ou la porte ouverte* [*Offene Thür zu dem verborgenen Heydentum*], trans. T. la Grue (1663; Amsterdam: Schipper, 1670), pp. 220–1; Orville, *Histoire des différens peuples du monde*, vol. 2, p. 68. Figueira discusses Rogerius in her 'Die Flambierte Frau', p. 58.
41. Sonnerat, *Voyage aux Index orientales et la Chine*, vol. 1, pp. 17–73.
42. 'Doch der Götter-Jüngling hebet / Aus der Flamme sich empor, / Und in seinen Armen schwebet / Die Geliebte mit hervor. / Es freut sich die Gottheit der reuigen Sünder; / Unsterbliche heben verlorene Kinder / Mit feurigen Armen zum Himmel empor' (But the divine Youth rose from the pyre, and in his arms his beloved soared forth with him. The Godhead rejoices in penitent sinners; lost children are raised up to heaven by Immortals with arms of fire). 'Der Gott und die Bajadere', in *Goethe*, ed. and trans. D. Luke (1964; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), pp. 168–73, on pp. 172–3.
43. Madame de Staël, *De l'Allemagne*, 2 vols (1807; Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1968), vol. 2, p. 235.
44. In his preface, Noël claims that he has completed his work after a conspectus of Greece, Rome, Scandinavia, India, Mexico, Peru, the New World and Africa. Noël, *Dictionnaire de la Fable*, vol. 1, p. vi. For a discussion of the comparative studies of classical civilizations being carried out by English scholars, see Drew, *India and the Romantic Imagination*, p. 47.
45. Noël, *Dictionnaire de la Fable*, vol. 1, p. 222.
46. After the Calas affair of 1762, as Maza has demonstrated, 'it had become the practice in significant court cases to print up multiple copies of trial briefs for perusal by anyone, friend or foe of the defendant, who took an interest in the case ... These factors, in addition to the often gripping, sensational contents of many *mémoires*, account for their development, in the later eighteenth century, into a highly popular form of pamphlet literature'. Maza, 'Domestic Melodrama as Political Ideology', pp. 1252–3. In an earlier article she notes that *mémoires* had significant print runs, with an estimated 20,000 copies being printed of the *mémoire* defending Nicole le Guay in 'l'affaire du collier' (1785); S. Maza, 'Le Tribunal de la nation: Les mémoires judiciaires et l'opinion publique à la fin de l'ancien régime', *Annales: Economies, sociétés, civilisations*, 42 (1987), pp. 73–90, on pp. 76–7.
47. Dupleix's *mémoire au Conseil* (1754) and *mémoire* (1756) are held in CAOM, $C^2$102.
48. For example, 'Le Public demandera sans doute: pourquoi cet acharnement universel contre le comte de Lally s'il n'y avoit rien à lui reprocher?' (The Public will doubtless ask: why this universal furious pursuit of the comte de Lally if there was nothing with which to reproach him?); Aubry, *Tableau historique de l'expédition de l'Inde, pour le comte de Lally contre M. le Procureur-Général* (Paris: Simon, 1766), p. 62.
49. Suleri provides an account of the impeachment of Hastings in *The Rhetoric of English India*, pp. 49–74, on p. 59.
50. Aubry, *Tableau historique de l'expédition de l'Inde*, p. 68.
51. Ibid., and Aubry, *Vraies causes de la perte de l'Inde.*
52. Aubry, *Vraies causes de la perte de l'Inde*, p. 5.
53. Marquis C.-J. P. de Bussy, *Mémoire à consulter et consultation, pour le sieur de Bussy, maréchal des camps et des armées du roi, au sujet du mémoire que le sieur de Lally, Ltn général, vient de répandre dans le public* (Paris: Michel Lambert, 1766), p. 42.
54. Ibid., p. iv.
55. Voltaire, *Fragments sur quelques révolutions dans l'Inde*, pp. 221–2.

56. Ibid., p. 223.
57. As a shareholder in the Compagnie des Indes, Voltaire was not as disinterested as his rhetoric suggests.
58. Ibid., p. 220.
59. Ibid., p. 177.
60. 'Des hommes entreprenants, qui auraient langui inconnus dans leur patrie, se placent et s'élèvent d'eux-mêmes dans ces pays lointains, où l'industrie est rare et nécessaire. Un de ces génies audacieux fut Mahé de La Bourdonnais, le Duguai-Trouin de son temps, supérieur à Duguai-Trouin par l'intelligence, et égal en courage' (Enterprising men, who would have languished unknown in their homeland, find themselves a situation and better themselves in these far-off countries, where industriousness is rare and necessary. One of these audacious geniuses was Mahé de La Bourdonnais, the Duguai-Trouin of his time, superior to Duguai-Trouin in intelligence, and equal in courage). Ibid., p. 173.
61. Ibid., p. 262. In article 20, he characterizes the disputes between the Compagnie shareholders and the government as 'des plaintes et des cris de vaincus, s'accusant les uns les autres de leurs infortunes au milieu de leurs debris' (the complaints and cries of the defeated, accusing one another for their misfortunes in the middle of their wreckage), p. 225.
62. Voltaire, *Précis du siècle de Louis XV*, pp. 1498–9.
63. The former soldier Alexandre Legoux de Flaix is an interesting case. Although he displays an obvious nostalgia for the powerful position that France had gained under the 'gouvernement sage' (wise governance) of Dupleix, he is also damning of Dupleix's imperial intentions and his 'impolitique projet d'établir la colonie de Pondichéry' (impolitic plan of establishing Pondichéry as a colony). A. Legoux de Flaix, *Essai historique, géographique et politique sur l'Indoustan, avec le tableau de son commerce; ce dernier pris dans une année moyenne, depuis 1702 jusqu'en 1770, époque de la surpression du privilege de l'ancienne compagnie des Indes Orientales*, 2 vols (Paris: Pougin, 1807), vol. 1, pp. 51, 324. His oscillating rhetoric exemplifies the uneasy distinction between overseas trade and overseas colonization. For a brief overview of the historical appropriation of Dupleix, see Vigié, 'La politique de Dupleix', pp. 17–18.
64. T. B. Macaulay, *Critical and Historical Essays*, 2 vols (1843; London: Dent, 1907), vol. 1, p. 489. See also Martineau, *Dupleix et l'Inde française*; Jouveau-Dubreuil, *Dupleix ou l'Inde conquise*; and H. Dodwell, *Dupleix and Clive: The Beginning of Empire* (London: Cass, 1967). I. N. Mukhopadhyay makes reference to the 'afterlife' of Dupleix during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; I. N. Mukhopadhyay, 'Imperial Ellipses: France, India, and the Critical Imagination' (PhD thesis, University of California, 2008), p. 43.
65. [Roubaud], *Le Politique Indien*, p. 85.
66. Gentil, *Mémoires sur l'Indoustan*, p. 27.
67. Le comte du Blanc, 'Mémoire sur le commerce de l'Inde', AN: AE, $B^3$459.
68. [Michaud], *Histoire des progrès et la chute de l'empire de Mysore*, vol. 1, p. 65.
69. See Chapter 1, above, p. 9.
70. Vigié, 'La politique de Dupleix', p. 27.
71. The author of *Etat Actuel de l'Inde* presciently remarked in 1787 that: 'on lui [Dupleix] a reproché d'avoir été la cause de la perte de nos établissemens dans l'Inde. La postérité attribuera cette perte à la foiblesse des gens en place qui n'ont pas su profiter de ses lumieres' (he [Dupleix] has been reproached for having been the cause of the loss of our trading posts in India. Posterity will attribute this loss to the weakness of the people

on the ground who did not know how to make the most of his enlightened thought). Anon., *Etat Actuel de l'Inde*, p. 79.

72. The development of this notion as a response to the increasing British administrative control of the subcontinent will be discussed fully in Chapter 6, below, pp. 134–6.
73. Raynal, *Histoire des deux Indes*, vol. 2, pp. 248–9. See Chapter 6, below, p. 136.
74. Fantin-Desodoards, *Révolutions de l'Inde pendant le dix-huitième siècle*, vol. 1, pp. xii–xiii.
75. See Chapter 5, below, p. 112.
76. Lescalier, letter sent to the Ministère de la Marine (1794), reproduced in Deleury, *Le Voyage en Inde*, pp. 977–8.
77. Montigny, 'Considérations sur l'Inde' (July 1798), AE: B^{3}459.
78. Le comte du Blanc, 'Mémoire sur le commerce de l'Inde', AN: AE, B^{3}459.
79. The First Treaty of Paris of 30 May 1814 restored the *comptoirs* to France according to the conditions laid out by the 1763 Treaty of Paris, AD, vol. 5.
80. Pierre Nora's term is not without problems, encouraging as it does a monolithic approach to France's past. It does, however, usefully convey how the *comptoirs* crystallized a certain nostalgia and a tendentious view of French influence before 1763. Nora, 'Présentation', pp. 15–21.
81. Le comte du Blanc, 'Mémoire sur le commerce de l'Inde', AN: AE, B^{3}459.
82. See Chapter 1, above, p. 15.
83. J. Baumel, 'Ratification du traité de cession des Établissements français de l'Inde: Adoption d'un projet de loi', Séance du 23 juillet 1962, *Journal Officiel de la République française: Débats parlementaires, Sénat*, 24 July 1962, pp. 1094–102, on p. 1097.

5 Historical India

1. On the popularity of history in the eighteenth century, see, for example, P. Gay, *The Enlightenment, an Interpretation: The Science of Freedom*, 2 vols (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1969–70), vol. 2, p. 369; and Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution*, p. 32, in addition to the works cited by Baker: D. Mornet, 'Les enseignements des bibliothèques privées au XVIII^e siècle', *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France*, 17 (1910), pp. 456–8, and M. Marion, *Les bibliothèques privées à Paris au milieu du XVIII^e siècle, 1750–59* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1978), pp. 135, 138.
2. Choudhury, 'Fact, Fantasy, or Mimesis?' p. 257.
3. W. R. Womack, *Eighteenth-Century Themes in the Histoire philosophique et politique des deux Indes of Guillaume Raynal*, *SVEC*, 96 (1972), p. 134.
4. Raynal, *Histoire des deux Indes*, vol. 1, p. 1. Raynal's claim to impartiality and his evaluation of documents in relation to other evidence are not dissimilar to aspects of the Rankean methodology which still underpins historical investigations today.
5. Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, p. 6.
6. Evans argues that this 'philosophic approach' to the subject characterizes all historical writing produced in the eighteenth century: 'The rationalist historians of the Enlightenment … still thought of their work as a species of moral illustration … History was "philosophy teaching by example"; human nature was universal, unchanging and unhistorical'. R. J. Evans, *In Defence of History* (London: Granta, 1997), pp. 15–16.
7. N. Ferguson, 'Virtual History: Towards a "Chaotic" Theory of the Past', in N. Ferguson (ed.), *Virtual History: Alternatives and Counterfactuals* (Basingstoke: Papermac, 1998), pp. 1–90, on p. 42.

8. Jean-Marie Lafont has created an inventory of all the 'authentic' Indian texts which were available in Paris after 1736; Lafont, 'Les Indes des Lumières' p. 22. Writers such as Voltaire relied on English-language as well as 'Indian' sources, notably John Zephaniah Holwell's second edition of *Interesting Historical Events, Relative to the Provinces of Bengal, and the Empire of Indostan* (1767). For an overview of the sources (both authentic and false) which inspired Voltaire's 'Indian' writing, see Hawley, 'L'Inde de Voltaire', pp. 139–78.
9. Murr, 'Les conditions d'émergence du discours', pp. 255–6.
10. Fréret, 'Recherches sur les Traditions Religieuses et Philosophiques des Indes pour servir de préliminaire à l'examen de le chronologie', in *Histoire de l'Académie Royale des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres depuis son établissement ... avec les mémoires de littérature tirés des Registres de cette Académie* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1753), vol. 18, pp. 34–8 (account written up posthumously by Jean-Pierre de Bougainville, new secretary of the *Académie Royale des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*).
11. After 1743, the *recueils* of the *Lettres édifiantes* contained almost no information about India; see Chapter 2, above, p. 23.
12. Murr, 'Les conditions d'émergence du discours', p. 263.
13. In chapter 3 of his third section, entitled 'Les Empires' (The Empires), Bossuet hastily dismisses the history of India, like the empires of both Bacchus and Hercules, as belonging to the realm of fables; J. B. Bossuet, *Discours sur l'Histoire Universelle, à Monseigneur le Dauphin pour expliquer la suite de la Religion et les changements des Empires* (1681; Paris: Garnier, 1863), p. 341.
14. Fréret, 'Recherches sur les Traditions Religieuses', p. 35, n. (a).
15. Alembert and Diderot, *Encyclopédie ou dictionnaire raisonné*, vol. 8, pp. 660–2, on p. 661.
16. Voltaire, *Fragments sur quelques révolutions dans l'Inde*, p. 226.
17. Voltaire, *Essai sur les mœurs*, part I, vol. 15, p. 247. Voltaire's aim of challenging a Judeo-Christian interpretation of the history of the world is particularly evident in the articles 'Abraham' and 'Adam' in his *Dictionnaire philosophique*. See Chapter 6, below, pp. 116–17.
18. Voltaire, *Fragments sur quelques révolutions dans l'Inde*, p. 227. In fact, Holwell's 'authentic' scholarship was based on the consultation of texts of very dubious origin. As in so many cases, Voltaire was deceived in his belief of having discovered 'authentic' India. See Marshall and Williams, *The Great Map of Mankind*, p. 104; and Hawley, 'L'Inde de Voltaire'pp. 146–7, for a discussion of Voltaire's reliance on bogus 'Indian' texts.
19. Murr, 'Les conditions d'émergence du discours', p. 260.
20. For a comprehensive overview of the role that China played in philosophical and theological debates, see B. Guy, *The French Image of China before and after Voltaire*, *SVEC*, 21 (1963). Guy argues, and the research carried out for this monograph supports his findings, that after *c.* 1760 India effectively replaced China in Voltaire's philosophy as another of his 'exotic weapons', p. 413.
21. Cœurdoux argued that the Brahmins were the descendants of Japhet (the third son of Noah); Cœurdoux, *Mœurs et Coutumes des Indiens*, p. 18.
22. Murr, 'Les conditions d'émergence du discours', p. 263.
23. Anon., *Etat Actuel de l'Inde*, p. 57. A new Compagnie des Indes, with a state monopoly on trade with India and China, was established in 1785 in response to increasing British competition and the attendant threat that this posed to French commerce with the subcontinent. See Chapter 1, above, p. 12.

24. Legoux de Flaix, *Essai historique, géographique et politique sur l'Indoustan*, vol. 1, pp. 3–4.
25. Ibid., p. 20.
26. For a more detailed discussion of utopian representations of Indian society, see Chapter 4, above, pp. 73–4.
27. Marshall and Williams, *The Great Map of Mankind*, p. 128.
28. Anon., *Etat Actuel de l'Inde*, p. 57.
29. Langlès, *Fables et contes indiens*, pp. xxxiv–xxxv.
30. Polier, *Mythologie des Indous*, pp. 4–5.
31. Langlès, *Fables et contes indiens*, p. iv, n. (a); Anon., *Les Indiens ou Tippoo-Saïb*, pp. 2, 3, 8–9.
32. Langlès, in fact, directly quotes Dow on p. xxxvi of his preliminary discourse.
33. Hawley, 'L'Inde de Voltaire', p. 156; Murr, 'Les conditions d'émergence du discours', p. 268.
34. Hawley, 'L'Inde de Voltaire', p. 146.
35. A.-H. Anquetil Duperron, *Zend-Avesta, ouvrage de Zoroastre*, 3 vols (Paris: Tilliard, 1771); Marshall and Williams, *The Great Map of Mankind*, p. 103.
36. Raynal, *Histoire des deux Indes*, vol. 1, p. 71.
37. Anon., *Etat Actuel de l'Inde*, p. 59.
38. C.-F. de C. Volney, *Les Ruines, ou Méditations sur les révolutions des empires*, 2nd edn (1791; Paris: Desenne, Volland, Plassan, 1792), p. 113.
39. [Michaud], *Histoire des progrès et la chute de l'empire de Mysore*, vol. 1, p. 27.
40. Ibid., p. 30.
41. The longevity of the Franco-British hostilities is discussed by Jasanoff in her comparative historical monograph, *Edge of Empire*, p. 9.
42. See Chapter 1, above, pp. 16–17. Robert and Isabelle Tombs briefly discuss the relationship between Britain and France in the second half of the eighteenth century; see *That Sweet Enemy*, pp. 293–301.
43. F. Furet, *Revolutionary France, 1770–1880* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), p. 103.
44. Starke's *Widow of Malabar* was first performed in London on 5 May 1790; E. Wray, 'English Adaptations of French Drama between 1780 and 1815', *Modern Language Notes*, 43 (1928), pp. 87–90, on p. 88. Lemierre's play was also translated into Italian.
45. Lemierre, *La Veuve du Malabar*, pp. 779–832, on p. 779. Antoine-Marin Lemierre (1733–93) was awarded several prizes by the Académie française; his work for the theatre was very much influenced by Voltairean ideology. See Darnton, 'The High Enlightenment and the Low-Life of Literature', pp. 89–90.
46. Truchet asserts that the play is set during Dupleix's governorship of Pondichéry, although there is no textual evidence, either in the play itself or in the documentation concerning its productions, which supports this hypothesis. J. Truchet, 'Lemierre, *La Veuve du Malabar ou l'Empire des coutumes*: Notice', in Truchet (ed.), *Théâtre au XVIII*[e] *siècle*, vol. 2, p. 1478.
47. Fludernik, 'Suttee as Heroic Martyrdom', p. 164.
48. Lemierre, *La Veuve du Malabar*, I.ii, p. 780.
49. See Chapter 1, above, p. 13.
50. Lemierre, *La Veuve du Malabar*, II.v, p. 799.
51. Montesquieu eloquently advocated the civilizing power of commerce in his *De l'esprit des lois*, 2 vols (1748; Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1979), vol. 2, p. 9. For a brief discussion of the currency of the belief in the civilizing power of trade, see S. Woolf, 'French Civiliza-

tion and Ethnicity in the Napoleonic Empire', *Past and Present*, 124 (1989), pp. 96–120, on p. 97.

52. Lemierre, *La Veuve du Malabar*, III.v, p. 801.
53. Mehta contends that the eulogy to Louis XV was a deliberate ruse with which to circumnavigate the censors. While valid, this argument overlooks the significance of the contrast established with other European powers. Mehta, *Widows, Pariahs, and Bayadères*, p. 59.
54. Lemierre, *La Veuve du Malabar*, V.vi, p. 832. In her brief analysis of the play, Dorothy M. Figueira hypothesizes that General Montalban's outrage against the custom of *sati* is not emblematic of French cultural superiority but an individual conviction. While the action of play certainly privileges the general's personal motivation behind his rescue of Lanassa, the final words firmly stress the general's position as Louis's subject and as a representative of French culture and civilization. Figueira, 'Die Flambierte Frau', p. 61.
55. Bratton provides a pertinent assessment of the 'cultural work' carried out by drama with regard to nineteenth-century British imperialism in 'Introduction', p. 1. A similar trend was apparent in French theatre under the *ancien régime* and the First Empire.
56. Voltaire, *Fragments sur quelques révolutions dans l'Inde*, p. 204.
57. As observed by G. Murray in his *Voltaire's Candide: The Protean gardener, 1755–1762*, *SVEC*, 69 (1970), p. 251.
58. Voltaire, *Fragments sur quelques révolutions dans l'Inde*, p. 262.
59. Ibid., article 4, p. 179.
60. See, for example, Murray, *Voltaire's Candide*, p. 271.
61. Voltaire, *Fragments sur quelques révolutions dans l'Inde*, article 5, p. 180.
62. Ibid., article 15, p. 209.
63. Voltaire commented that all travellers needed 'c'est d'apprendre à ne pas juger du reste de la terre par son clocher' (to learn how not to judge the rest of the world by their own church tower); ibid., article 6, p. 181.
64. Pagden, *European Encounters with the New World*, p. 51.
65. Anon., *Tableau historique de l'Inde*, p. 50.
66. For example, ibid., pp. 46, 159.
67. Ibid., pp. 261–4.
68. S. Aravamudan, *Tropicopolitans: Colonialism and Agency, 1688–1804* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 1999), p. 4.
69. There are various spellings of 'Tipu Saib', frequently known as 'Tipu Sultan'. Here, the standard English spelling is used and he is referred to as 'Tipu Sultan' unless specific reference is being made to one of the characters in either the play by Gobert and Dubois or that by Jouy.
70. La Luzerne to M. Ruffin, 24 August 1788, AN: M, B^{3}803. For the visit of the ambassadors to Versailles, see Chapter 2, above, pp. 32–40.
71. Teltscher, *India Inscribed*, '"Vocabularies of Vile Epithets": British Representations of the Sultans of Mysore', pp. 229–58; and L. Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World 1600–1850* (London: Pimlico, 2003), p. 297.
72. Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire*, p. 153.
73. Teltscher, *India Inscribed*, p. 255.
74. Assayag, *L'Inde fabuleuse*, p. 117. This chapter is an extended version of Assayag's 'Perfide Albion ou la France outragée. Une tragédie du repli colonial sous l'Empire: *Tippô-Saëb* d'Étienne de Jouy (1812)', in D. Lombard (ed.), *Rêver l'Asie: Exotisme et littérature coloniale aux Indes, en Indochine et en Insulinde* (Paris: Éditions de l'École des hautes études

en sciences sociales, 1993), pp. 197–218. Contrary to Assayag's claim in both publications, the play dates from 1813 and not 1812, having its first staging in the Théâtre français on 27 January 1813: É. de Jouy, *Tippô-Saëb: Tragédie en cinq actes et en vers* (Paris: Barba, Pillet, Roullet, 1813).

75. The exotic spectacle was particularly appreciated by the theatre-going public, although it should be noted that neither the staged 'India' offered by Gobert and Dubois, nor that by Jouy, had the longevity or the universal appeal of Lemierre's *La Veuve du Malabar* (1770), which was translated into both English and Italian. Starke's *Widow of Malabar* was first performed in London on 5 May 1790. Figueira discusses the Europe-wide success of *La Veuve du Malabar*, and parodies of it, in her 'Die Flambierte Frau', p. 61.
76. For an examination of the importance of visual elements in French melodramas at the beginning of the nineteenth century, see M. Turim, 'French Melodrama: Theory of a Specific History', *Theatre Journal*, 39 (1987), pp. 307–27, on p. 308.
77. M. Gobert and J.-B. Dubois, 'Préface', in *Tipoo-Saïb, ou la prise de Séringapatam: Mélodrame historique en trois actes, en prose* (Paris: Barba, 1804), unpaginated.
78. For a brief discussion of the figure of the 'nègre' as a 'marker' of exoticism on the French stage in the eighteenth century, see Brown, 'The Self-Fashionings of Olympe de Gouges', p. 392.
79. As Norman Hampson argues, under Napoleon submission to the old order was succeeded by a devotion to *patrie*; N. Hampson, *The Perfidy of Albion: French Perceptions of England during the French Revolution* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), p. 164.
80. Gobert and Dubois, *Tipoo-Saïb*, p. 6.
81. Church has argued that the increasingly popular 'civic' representation of the nation under the *ancien régime* was indicated by the decline in the use of the idiom of race. W. F. Church, 'France', in O. Ranum (ed.), *National Consciousness, History and Political Culture in Early-Modern Europe* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), pp. 43–66.
82. Gobert and Dubois, *Tipoo-Saïb*, p. 7.
83. S. Woolf, *Napoleon's Integration of Europe* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1991), pp. 31–2.
84. See Woolf, 'French Civilization and Ethnicity in the Napoleonic Empire', p. 119.
85. Gobert and Dubois, *Tipoo-Saïb*, p. 10.
86. A caricature not unlike that offered in the somewhat dated but nonetheless canonical history by Alfred Cobban in his *A History of France, Volume 2: From the First Empire to the Second Empire 1799–1871*, 2nd edn (1961; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), pp. 18–19.
87. Gobert and Dubois, *Tipoo-Saïb*, pp. 20–1.
88. Forrest, *Tiger of Mysore*, pp. 187–8.
89. M. Ribié, *Petit-Pot, ou les bouchers et les charbonniers, parodie de Tipoo-Saïb, en trois intermèdes, à grand Spectacle* (Paris: chez George, an XII [1804]).
90. Assayag, *L'Inde fabuleuse*, p. 118.
91. As argued so cogently by White, such modes of emplotment affect the production of 'systems of meaning'. H. White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore, MD, and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), pp. 26–57, on p. 44.
92. Teltscher, for example, emphasizes the high number of satirical accounts contained in the *Annual Register*; see Teltscher, *India Inscribed*, p. 252. In contrast, Mariana Starke's passing reference in her 1789 play *The Sword of Peace* is evidence of the currency of the figure of Tipu Sultan as the embodiment of perfidy. Her heroine, Eliza, dismisses the

suggestion that she should marry the East India Company's Resident thus: 'to imagine a woman of youth and fortune wou'd sacrifice herself for a paltry ambition she despises. – I – I declare I wou'd as soon marry Tippoo Saib'. Starke, *The Sword of Peace*, p. 182.

93. This generic classification also contrasts Jouy's play with the melodrama by Gobert and Dubois. Indeed, Jouy's classification, along with his use of poetry, may suggest that the play was aimed at a different type of audience. For a discussion of the different theatrical forms of tragedy and melodrama at the end of the eighteenth century and their respective audiences, see Le Hir, 'Feminism, Theater, Race', p. 67.
94. Jouy, *Tippô-Saëb*, 'Préface', p. vii. After serving as an officer in Chandernagor, Victor-Joseph-Étienne de Jouy (1769–1846) returned to France and became a prolific author of light, libertine comedies. A supporter of Bonaparte, under the Hundred Days he accepted the position of Commissaire Impérial au théâtre. For further biographical details, see Assayag, *L'Inde fabuleuse* pp. 101–7.
95. Consider: Le Maistre de la Tour, *Histoire d'Ayder-Ali-Khan*, vol. 1, p. 1; [Michaud], *Histoire des progrès et la chute de l'empire de Mysore*, vol. 1, pp. 64–5; Law de Lauriston, *État politique de l'Inde en 1777*, p. 83; Caraccioli, *Lettres d'un Indien à Paris*, vol. 1, p. 2; Sonnerat, *Voyage aux Indes Orientales et à la Chine*, vol. 1, pp. 4, 15, 94; and Le comte de Modave, *Voyage en Inde*, pp. 46, 67, 97, 179, 288, 550.
96. Following Said, in postcolonial criticism the idiom of the stage has been viewed as highly contentious, exemplifying colonialism; as Said asserts: 'The Orient then seems to be, not an unlimited extension beyond the familiar European world, but rather a closed field, a theatrical stage affixed to Europe'. Said, *Orientalism*, p. 63.
97. Assayag, *L'Inde fabuleuse*, p. 117.
98. Jouy, *Tippô-Saëb*, 'Préface', pp. vii, ix–x. Indeed, Jouy, in evoking the popularity of Lemierre's *La Veuve du Malabar* (1770), contrasts this previous dramatization of India (which he dismisses as 'une de ces absurdités romanesques' (one of those fanciful absurdities)) with his own authentic representation, which respects 'mœurs locales' (local customs).
99. Ibid., p. v.
100. Jouy, *Tippô-Saëb*, 'Précis historique', p. xiii.
101. Ibid., p. xiv.
102. See, for example, Tombs and Tombs, *That Sweet Enemy*, p. 238.
103. Jouy *Tippô-Saëb*, I.iii, pp. 11–12. For a useful account of the Napoleonic colonial adventure in Egypt and India, see Y. Bénot, *La démence coloniale sous Napoléon* (Paris: La découverte, 1991), esp. pp. 104–11.
104. Jouy, *Tippô-Saëb*, 'Notes', p. 79.
105. H. de Brevannes, *Tippô-Saïb, ou la destruction de l'empire de Mysore, tragédie en trois actes* (Paris: Dondey-Dupré, 1813), p. i.
106. Le Maistre de la Tour, *Histoire d'Ayder-Ali-Khan*, vol. 1, pp. xi–xii.
107. Ibid., pp. x–xi.
108. Ibid., p. v.
109. Ibid., p. ix. His exhortation contradicted the prevailing interest in Hinduism, and the trend of viewing 'Hindu' as synonymous with 'Indian'. See Chapter 4, above, pp. 70–8.
110. Legoux de Flaix, *Essai historique, géographique et politique sur l'Indoustan*, vol. 1, p. 357.
111. Le Maistre de la Tour, *Histoire d'Ayder-Ali-Khan*, vol. 1, p. 22.
112. Ibid.
113. Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 41–2.
114. Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 44–5.

115. [Michaud], *Histoire des progrès et la chute de l'empire de Mysore*, vol. 1, pp. 96–7.
116. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 96
117. [Michaud], *Histoire des progrès et la chute de l'empire de Mysore*, 'Avis préliminaire', unpaginated.
118. Earlier in the 'Avis préliminaire' Michaud talks of 'Aujourd'hui que nos regards commencent à se porter sur l'Inde' (Now that our concerns are naturally drawn towards India). For a précis of the Napoleonic colonial adventure in Egypt and India, see Bénot, *La démence coloniale sous Napoléon*, pp. 104–11. In 1796, Monneron, Député extraordinaire des Établissements françaises, aux Indes Orientales, sent the first in a series of reports to the Directoire Exécutif advocating the reestablishment of French trade with the East Indies. 'Mémoire présenté au Directoire Exécutif, par le C*** Monneron' ([May 1796]), AN: AE, B[3]459.
119. [Michaud], *Histoire des progrès et la chute de l'empire de Mysore*, 'Avis préliminaire'.
120. [Michaud], *Histoire des progrès et la chute de l'empire de Mysore*, vol. 1, p. 36. For an analysis of the similarities between these descriptions of the *bayadères*, see Chapter 3, above, pp. 45–7.
121. [Michaud], *Histoire des progrès et la chute de l'empire de Mysore*, vol. 2, pp. 9–10.
122. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 13.
123. M. Chase and C. Shaw, 'The Dimensions of Nostalgia', in C. Shaw and M. Chase (eds), *The Imagined Past: History and Nostalgia* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), pp. 1–17, on p. 1.
124. D. Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 3–34, on p. 13.
125. Niall Ferguson gives one of the more succinct definitions of 'counterfactual history' in the introduction to *Virtual History*: 'What if there had been no English Civil War? What if there had been no American War of Independence? ... The obvious answer to such hypothetical or "counterfactual" questions is simple: why bother asking them? Why concern ourselves with what *didn't* happen? Just as there is no use crying over spilt milk, runs the argument, so there is no use in wondering how the spillage might have been averted. (Even more futile to speculate what would have happened if we *had* spilt milk that's still safe in the bottle)'. Ferguson, 'Virtual History', p. 2.
126. Legoux de Flaix, *Essai historique, géographique et politique sur l'Indoustan*, 'Avant-Propos', vol. 1, p. iii.
127. Ibid.
128. Voltaire, *Précis du siècle de Louis XV*, p. 1513.
129. See Chapter 5, above, pp. 96–7.
130. Aubry, *Tableau historique de l'expédition de l'Inde*, p. 3.
131. [Michaud], *Histoire des progrès et la chute de l'empire de Mysore*, vol. 1, pp. 64–5.
132. Fantin-Desodoards, *Révolutions de l'Inde pendant le dix-huitième siècle*, vol. 1, p. xii.
133. Ibid., pp. v, xiv, xv. See also Chapter 3, above, p. 43.
134. Le Tréguilly and Morazé (eds), *L'Inde et la France*, p. 192.
135. 'Michaud surtout ou plutôt les auteurs des deux articles M. M. Langlès et Desodoards ont donné des détails historiques très étendues avec une nomenclature des ouvrages imprimées qui ont traité de l'histoire de l'Empire de Mysore en général, depuis 1720 jusqu'en 1799, et qui ont parlé d'Hyder-Aly et de son fils Tippoo-Saeb en particulier' (Michaud particularly, or rather, the authors of the two articles Langlès and Desodoards, have given extensive and detailed historical accounts with a list of all the printed works which have dealt with Mysorean Empire in general, between 1720 and 1799, and spoken

particularly about Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan). The present research has been unable to identify the Langlès article to which the report refers. 'Note sur les relations diplomatiques du sultan Tippoo-Saeb avec la France, depuis 1786 jusqu'en 1799, Ministère des Affaires étrangères: Direction des Archives et Chancelleries, Paris, le 12 mai 1837', AN: AE, B[3]459. Similarly, in Gentil, *Mémoires sur l'Indoustan*, a work edited by Gentil's son, Fantin-Desodoards's *Révolutions de l'Inde* is referenced in a footnote as evidence supporting Gentil's analysis (p. 91).

136. E. H. Carr, quoted in Ferguson, *Virtual History*, p. 4.
137. See Chapter 1, above, p. 16.
138. D. Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing and Imperial Administration* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 1993), pp. 1–12, on p. 3.

6 The *Philosophes*, 'Anticolonialism' and the Rule of the British East India Company

1. This chapter adopts the same approach to the notion of philosophy as that adopted by Robert Darnton, namely that 'philosophical' in the eighteenth century did not have the same definition as in the twentieth and 'that a lot of trash somehow got mixed up in the eighteenth-century idea of "philosophy"'. Darnton, 'The High Enlightenment and the Low-Life of Literature', p. 81. Although written almost forty years ago, Darnton's examination of the late Enlightenment from below, incorporating pornography and scurrilous *libelles*, remains an important source of reference for subsequent historical research.
2. Although there was no universally adopted view of Mogul despotism (Anquetil Duperron, for example, challenged Montesquieu's conception of it), despotic rule became a generic feature of eighteenth-century representations of India. See Weinberger-Thomas, 'Les yeux fertiles de la mémoire', p. 22. For an outline of Anquetil Duperron's attempt to challenge Montesquieu's received orthodoxy about Oriental despotism, see F. G. Whelan, 'Oriental Despotism: Anquetil-Duperron's Response to Montesquieu', *History of Political Thought*, 22 (2001), pp. 619–47.
3. Although Schwab's influential account of the 'Renaissance orientale' has since been challenged as both overstated and unrealistic, particularly with reference to the connection between the consolidation of the British empire and British interest in Indian culture, it is still useful in terms of its periodization of French and German scholarship on, and interest in, India. Schwab, *La Renaissance orientale*, p. 43; see also Leask, *British Romantic Writers and the East*, p. 10; and P. J. Marshall, 'British–Indian Connections *c.* 1780 to *c.* 1830: The Empire of the Officials', in Franklin (ed.), *Romantic Representations of British India*, pp. 45–64, on pp. 45–6. On what he dubs the 'Indomania' evident in France at the end of the eighteenth century, see Lafont, 'Les Indes des Lumières', pp. 13–22.
4. Hawley, 'L'Inde de Voltaire', p. 165. For a discussion of the impact of the discovery of Chinese thought on Western philosophy (particularly after the arrival of the Jesuits' first 'translations' of Confucius's writings, see Guy, *The French Image of China*, pp. 401-14.
5. See J. Mohan, 'La civilisation la plus antique: Voltaire's Images of India', *Journal of World History*, 16:2 (2005), at <http://historycooperative.org/journals/jwh/16.2/mohan.html> [accessed 10 October 2006]; and Hawley, 'L'Inde de Voltaire', p. 156.
6. Hawley, 'L'Inde de Voltaire', pp. 145–7. For a list of the books on India which Voltaire had in his personal library, see Hawley's appendix, pp. 175–8.

7. Voltaire, *Essai sur les mœurs*, part I, vol. 15, p. 295.
8. Voltaire, *Dictionnaire philosophique*, p. 24. See also the section 'De Bram, Abram, Abraham', in Voltaire, *Essai sur les mœurs*, part I, vol. 15, pp. 71–2.
9. Voltaire, *Dictionnaire philosophique*, pp. 25–6. In his 'Philosophie de l'Histoire' (1765), which became the introduction to the *Essai sur les mœurs* in 1769, Voltaire asserts that Adimo, son of Brama, was the first man, from whom all others were descended. Voltaire, *Essai sur les mœurs*, part I, vol. 15, p. 26.
10. Voltaire, letter 9 of *Lettres chinoises, indiennes et tartares à M. Pawr par un bénédictin* (1776), in *Œuvres complètes de Voltaire*, 52 vols (Paris: Garnier frères, 1877–85), vol. 29, pp. 451–98, on p. 484.
11. For a detailed discussion of this text, which duped numerous *savants* of the Académie in addition to Anquetil Duperron, see L. Rocher (ed.), *Ezourvedam: A French Veda of the Eighteenth Century* (Amsterdam, PA: University of Pennsylvania, Studies on South Asia, 1984). An overview of the history of the influence of this forgery is also provided by W. Halbfass, *India and Europe: An Essay in Philosophical Understanding* (Delhi: Moltilal Bararsidass, 1990), p. 46. The *Ezour-Vedam* was published in two volumes by the Baron Guillaume de Sainte-Croix in 1775. It was translated into English in 1793.
12. Hawley, 'L'Inde de Voltaire', p. 153.
13. See P. J. Marshall (ed.), *The British Discovery of Hinduism in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 33. See also A. Ray, 'Orientalism and Religion in the Romantic Era: Rammohan Ray's Vedanta(s)', in Franklin (ed.), *Romantic Representations of British India*, pp. 259–77.
14. Holwell, *Interesting Historical Events*, part 1, part 2, pp. 5, 10, in Franklin (ed.), *Representing India*, vol. 1; Voltaire, *Essai sur les mœurs*, part I, vol. 15, p. 80.
15. Voltaire, *Fragments sur quelques révolutions dans l'Inde*, p. 228. Voltaire is making direct reference to Holwell, *Interesting Historical Events*, part 2, pp. 9–10; and Dow, 'A Dissertation Concerning the Ancient History of the Indians', in *The History of Hindostan*, vol. 2, p. lxxiv.
16. Voltaire, *Fragments sur quelques révolutions dans l'Inde*, p. 230.
17. Voltaire, *Essai sur les mœurs*, part III, vol. 17, ch. 157, p. 486; and *Fragments sur quelques révolutions dans l'Inde*, p. 186.
18. 'From such weak grounds and evidence as this, and the help of a few exhibitions of the *seemingly* monstrous idols of the *Hindoos*, the *Popish* authors hesitate not to stigmatise those most venerable sages the *Brahmins*, as having instituted doctrines and worship, which if believed, would reduce them below the level of the brute creation'. Holwell, *Interesting Historical Events*, part 1, pp. 6–7.
19. Voltaire, *Fragments sur quelques révolutions dans l'Inde*, p. 186. The corruption and sexual immorality of Portuguese missionaries in India is the focus of Voltaire's short epistolary novel, *Les lettres d'Amabed* (1763). See Voltaire, *Romans et contes*, pp. 513–58.
20. Compare Voltaire's assertions in his *Fragments sur quelques révolutions dans l'Inde*, p. 226, with Holwell, *Interesting Historical Events*, part 2, pp. 24–5.
21. Voltaire, *Fragments sur quelques révolutions dans l'Inde*, article 27, 'Du baptême indien' (On Indian baptism), pp. 241–2. See also the entry 'Baptême', in the *Dictionnaire philosophique*, pp. 60–2.
22. Furetière, *Le Dictionnaire universel*, vol. 1, unpaginated; and *Dictionnaire universel françois et latin, vulgairement appelé Dictionnaire de Trévoux*, 5th edn, 8 vols (Paris: Compagnie des Librairies associées, 1752), vol. 2, p. 38.
23. Voltaire, *Fragments sur quelques révolutions dans l'Inde*, p. 184.

24. Voltaire, *Précis du siècle de Louis XV*, p. 1468. Denis Diderot's entry on the 'Brachmanes' in the *Encyclopédie* similarly asserts that Indian philosophers carry out self-immolation and that the act of *sati* is not reserved for women alone; see Alembert and Diderot, *Encyclopédie ou dictionnaire raisonné*, vol. 2, p. 391.
25. Voltaire, *Lettres chinoises, indiennes, et tartares*, p. 484.
26. Holwell concludes his section on the *sati* with an apostrophe: 'Although it is not our intention here to defend the tenets of the *Bramins*, yet we may be allowed to offer some justification on behalf of the *Gentoo* women in the action before us – Let us view it (as we should every other action) without prejudice, and without keeping always in sight our own tenets and customs, and prepossessions that generally result therefrom, to the injury of others; – if we view these women in a just light, we shall think more candidly of them, and confess they act upon heroic, as well as rational and pious principles'. Holwell, *Interesting Historical Events*, part 2, pp. 97–8.
27. See Chapter 4, above, pp. 74–5, and Chapter 5, above, p. 94.
28. J.-H. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, 'Préambule' [to *La Chaumière indienne*], in *Œuvres complètes*, 12 vols (Paris: Dupont, 1825–6), vol. 6, pp. 207–29, on p. 208.
29. Ibid., vol. 6, p. 212.
30. Furetière, *Le Dictionnaire universel*, vol. 1, unpaginated.
31. Montesquieu, *De l'esprit des lois*, book 17, ch. 6, 'Nouvelle cause physique de la servitude de l'Asie et de la liberté de l'Europe', vol. 1, pp. 430–1, on p. 431.
32. Leask, *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing*, pp. 112–15, on p. 114.
33. Volney, *Les Ruines*, pp. 113. Volney, along with Langlès and Condorcet, was instrumental in the founding of the École des Langues orientales vivantes in Paris in 1795.
34. Voltaire, *Essai sur les mœurs*, part IV, vol. 18, p. 452.
35. In a previous chapter devoted to the Moguls, he had accused the seventeenth-century traveller Tavernier of speaking more to tradesmen than to philosophers. Ibid., part III, vol. 17, p. 483.
36. Ibid., part IV, vol. 18, p. 454.
37. Pitts, *A Turn to Empire*, p. 165.
38. Montesquieu, *De l'esprit des lois*, vol. 2, p. 9. See also A. Pagden, 'The Effacement of Difference: Colonialism and the Origins of Nationalism in Diderot and Herder', in G. Prakash (ed.), *After Colonialism: Imperial Histories and Postcolonial Displacements* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 129–52, on p. 130.
39. Raynal, *Histoire des deux Indes*, vol. 1, p. 2; Voltaire, *Fragments sur quelques révolutions dans l'Inde*, p. 172.
40. Das, after Cassilly, identifies the first three of these themes in her *Myths and Realities of French Imperialism in India*, pp. 23–4. See also T. A. Cassilly, 'The Anticolonial Tradition in France: The Eighteenth Century to the Fifth Republic' (PhD thesis, Colombia University, 1975).
41. CAOM, $C^2$105.
42. Voltaire, *Précis du siècle de Louis XV*, p. 1507. For a discussion of the Company's involvement in the farming of tobacco, and this means of paying its shareholders and creditors, see L. Deschamps, *Histoire de la question coloniale en France* (Paris: Plon, 1891), pp. 251–2.
43. See Chapter 1, above, pp. 16–17.
44. A trade of which Voltaire approved; *Précis du siècle de Louis XV*, p. 1508.
45. Compagnie Administration en France, 1756–69 (1768), CAOM, $C^2$52.
46. Voltaire, *Essai sur les mœurs*, part I, vol. 15, p. 295.

47. Voltaire, *Fragments sur quelques révolutions dans l'Inde*, p. 172.
48. [P. A. Caron] de Beaumarchais, *Le Vœu de toutes les nations et l'intérêt de toutes les puissances dans l'abaissement et l'humiliation de Grande-Bretagne* (Paris: n.p., 1778), p. 44.
49. Le comte de Modave, *Voyage en Inde*, 'La Guerre des Jāt, Madec et le voyage d'Agra à Hyderabad' (juillet 1775–décembre 1776), p. 550.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. Anon., '*Evénémens historiques, intéressans, relatifs aux provinces de Bengale & et de l'Indostan. On y a joint la mythologie, la cosmologie, les fêtes & les jeunes des Gentous & une différentiation sur la métempsycose, dont on attribue faussement le dogme à Pythagore.* Ouvrage compose par J. Z. Holwell, & traduit de l'Anglais. 2 parties en 8°. A Amsterdam, & se trouve à Paris, chez H. C. de Hansy, le jeune, 1768', *Journal encyclopédique*, 2:2 (March 1769), pp. 202–16, on p. 209.
53. Anon., '*The history of Hindustan, &c., C'est-à-dire, Histoire de l'Indostan, depuis la mort d'Akvat jusqu'à la jouissance paisible du trône par Aurengzeb. Avec une dissertation préliminaire sur la nature et l'origine du despotisme dans l'Indostan, des recherches sur l'état actuel du Bengale, & un plan pour rétablir ce royaume dans son ancienne splendeur*. Par M. Alexandre Dow, écuyer, lieutenant-colonel au service de la compagnie des Indes à Londres, chez Beeket & de Hondt, 1772', *Journal encyclopédique*, 2:2 (March 1773), pp. 246–56, on p. 250.
54. See Deschamps, *Histoire de la question coloniale*, p. 295.
55. Anon., '*Dissertation sur les mœurs, les usages, le langage, la religion & la philosophie des Indous, suivi d'une exposition générale & succincte du gouvernement & de l'état actuel de l'Indoustan*, ouvrages traduits de l'anglais. A Paris, chez Saugrain & Lamy, & chez Barrois 1779', *Journal encyclopédique*, 7:3 (1 November 1779), pp. 457–65, on p. 465.
56. Cited by Womack in his *Eighteenth-Century Themes*, p. 134.
57. For a brief overview of the publishing history of the *Histoire des deux Indes*, see Y. Bénot, 'Avertissement', in Raynal, *Histoire des deux Indes*, ed. Bénot, pp. 5–12.
58. Raynal, *Histoire des deux Indes*, vol. 1, p. 2.
59. A. Strugnell, 'The *Histoire des deux Indes* and the Debate on the British in India', in J. Mallinson (ed.), *Voltaire; Raynal; Rousseau; Allégorie*, *SVEC*, 2003:07 (2003), pp. 233–55, on p. 243.
60. Y. Bénot, *Diderot, de l'athéisme à l'anticolonialisme* (Paris: Maspero, 1970), p. 259.
61. The assumption that the *Histoire* was a 'handbook' of the 'Enlightenment', and the belief that Napoleon carried all ten volumes with him on his expedition to Egypt, have become *idées reçues* in the numerous articles written about the *Histoire* since 1970; see, for example, J. H. M. Salmon, 'The Abbé Raynal, 1713–1796: An Intellectual Odyssey', *History Today*, 26 (1976), pp. 109–17, on p. 109.
62. Raynal, *Histoire des deux Indes*, ed. Bénot, usefully identifies authors (p. 15).
63. A. Strugnell, 'Dialogue et désaccord idéologiques entre Raynal et Diderot: le cas des Anglais en Inde', in H.-J. Lüsebrink and A. Strugnell (eds), *L'Histoire des deux Indes*, *SVEC*, 333 (1995), pp. 409–22, on p. 412.
64. Raynal, *Histoire des deux Indes*, book 18, chs 41–2.
65. Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 67–8.
66. Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India*, p. 4.
67. Abbattista examines this debate predominantly with reference to Britain. G. Abbattista, 'Empire, Liberty and the Rule of Difference: European Debates on British Colonial-

ism in Asia at the End of the Eighteenth Century', *European Review of History – Revue européenne d'Histoire*, 13 (2006), pp. 473–98.

68. E. Burke, 'Speech on Fox's India Bill', 1 December 1783, in *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke*, ed. P. Langford, 9 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981–96), vol. 5: 'India: Madras and Bengal 1774–1785', ed. P. J. Marshall, pp. 378–451, on p. 392.
69. Anon., *Les Indiens ou Tippoo-Saïb*, p. v.
70. As the character Lady Oldham comments in Act I, scene i of Samuel Foote's *The Nabob* (1772), in *Plays by Samuel Foote and Arthur Murphy*, ed. G. Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 81–111, on p. 84.
71. Marshall, 'British–Indian Connections', p. 60. Philip Lawson demonstrates that even before 1774, India 'took up far more time in public and private deliberation than America'; P. Lawson, *A Taste for Empire and Glory: Studies in British Overseas Expansion, 1660–1800* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1997), 'The Missing Link: The Imperial Dimension in Understanding Hanoverian Britain', pp. 747–51, on p. 748.
72. He makes explicit reference to the public disquiet evident in Britain, referring readers to 'les Papiers Anglois publiés depuis 1766' (English papers published since 1766). [Roubaud], *Le Politique Indien*, p. 5.
73. Ibid., pp. 21–2.
74. Ibid., p. 23.
75. Ibid., p. 82. It is somewhat ironic that Roubaud's rhetoric echoes that of the Company, which argued that its authority had been derived from that of the Moguls, and that centuries of Mogul despotism had made the new 'British' form an appropriate form of government. For a discussion of the justifications offered by the Company of its rule in India, see T. R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 3–5.
76. [Roubaud], *Le Politique Indien*, p. 82
77. Ibid., pp. 85–6. For a discussion of the *ad hominem* attacks which were provoked by the French defeat of 1763, see Chapter 4, above, pp. 78–9.
78. [Roubaud], *Le Politique Indien*, p. 87.
79. William Bolts describes the British monarch as 'an Asiatic Potentate' in *Considerations on Indian Affairs; particularly respecting the Present State of Bengal and its Dependencies* (London: n.p., 1772), p. 221; while Dow states that 'Every petty officer in the state [Bengal], every clerk of the revenues, assumed the tyrant in his own department. Justice was totally suspended', Dow, *The History of Hindostan*, vol. 3, p. xciv. Kate Teltscher identifies Bolts as the first English-language writer to apply the term 'despotism' to Company rule; Teltscher, *India Inscribed*, pp. 163–4.
80. [Roubaud], *Le Politique Indien*, p. 86.
81. In his article on the Société des Amis des Noirs, Resnick provides a useful overview of anti-slavery writing prior to 1789; see D. P. Resnick, 'The Société des Amis des Noirs and the Abolition of Slavery', *French Historical Studies*, 7 (1972), pp. 558–69.
82. [Roubaud], *Le Politique Indien*, p. 103.
83. Anon., '*Etat civil, politique et commerçant du Bengale; ou histoire des conquêtes et de l'administration de la compagnie angloise dans ce pays*; ouvrage traduit de l'Anglois de M. Bolts, alderman, ou juge de la cour du maire de Calcutta. Par M. de Meunier, 2 volumes. A la Haye, chez Gosse fils, 1775', *Journal encyclopédique*, 8:1 (November 1775), pp. 34–55, on pp. 34–5.
84. Anon., Letter 7, '*Etat Civil, Politique et Commerçant du Bengale, ou Histoire des Conquêtes et de l'Administration de la Compagnie Angloise dans ce Pays*; ouvrage traduit de l'Anglois

par M. Bolts, Alderman ou Juge de la Cour du Maire de Calcutta; par M. de Meunier; 2 Vol. in 8° le tout de 500 pages. A la Haye chez Gosse fils', *L'Année littéraire*, 4 (1775), pp. 145–61, on pp. 145, 160.

85. For a useful analysis of the oscillating Anglophilia and Anglophobia evident in the *Histoire des deux Indes*, see Strugnell's 'The *Histoire des deux Indes*', and 'Dialogue et désaccord idéologiques entre Raynal et Diderot'.
86. Raynal, *Histoire des deux Indes*, vol. 2, p. 58. Demonstrating once more how ideas and representations circulated, the 'eyewitness' description of Bengal offered by Sonnerat in 1782 bears a striking resemblance to Diderot's invective: 'Les Anglais … firent regretter le joug moins tyrannique des autres Nations: sans paroître souverains, à l'ombre d'un phantôme qu'ils décoroient du titre de *Nabob*, ils execèrent le despotisme le plus dur, & commirent des concussions abominables. Cet excès de violence, joint aux fléaux de toute espèce qu'éprouvèrent les Indiens, changea leur pays en une vaste solitude, dont la moitié, cultivée jadis par les hommes libres, n'est plus habitée aujourd'hui que par des bêtes féroces' (The English … made them miss the less tyrannical yoke of the other Nations: without appearing to be sovereigns, using the pretext of a title which they obtained from the *Nabob*, they exercised a most harsh despotism & committed abominable illegal extractions. This excess of violence, joined with curses of all kinds which afflict Indians, turned their country into a vast desert of which half, formerly cultivated by free men, is inhabited today only by ferocious beasts). Sonnerat, *Voyage aux Indes Orientales et à la Chine*, vol. 1, p. 8.
87. For example, Raynal appears to lift, wholesale, Dow's narrative of Emperor Akbar (which also served as the source text for La Harpe's 1783 play *Les Brames*); compare Dow, *The History of Hindostan*, vol. 1, pp. xxv–xxvi, with Raynal, *Histoire des deux Indes*, vol. 1, pp. 39–40. Similarly, Holwell's description of the worship of the cow appears verbatim in the *Histoire*: compare Holwell, *Interesting Historical Events*, part 1, pp. 199–200, with Raynal, *Histoire des deux Indes*, vol. 1, pp. 404–7.
88. *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke*, vol. 6: 'India: The Launching of the Hastings Impeachment 1786–1788', ed. P. J. Marshall, p. xvi.
89. The following evidence contradicts the findings of Das, *Myths and Realities of French Imperialism in India*, pp. 273–4.
90. Voltaire, *Fragments sur quelques révolutions dans l'Inde*, p. 179.
91. Ibid., p. 262.
92. J.-H. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, 'Avant-propos' [to *La Chaumière indienne*], in *Œuvres complètes*, vol. 6 (1825), pp. 195–205, on p. 197.
93. Das, *Myths and Realities of French Imperialism in India*, p. 267. See also 'Mémoires Généraux, 1777–1784', CAOM, $C^2$117; and 'Mémoires sur la chute et la suppression de la Compagnie, 1761–1771', CAOM, $C^2$105–6.
94. Anon., *Etat Actuel de l'Inde*, pp. 146–7.
95. Law de Lauriston, *État politique de l'Inde en 1777*, p. 110.
96. Ibid., p. 111.
97. Marquis C.-J. P. de Bussy, 'Explication que Monsieur le Marquis de Bussy a eue avec le Ministre sur l'Expédition de l'Inde dont il est chargé, servant de préface au présent Journal', in *Journal de Bussy (Commandant Général des forces de terre et de mer dans l'Inde), 13 novembre 1781–13 mars 1783*, ed. A. Martineau (Pondichéry: Imprimerie moderne, 1932), pp. 1–5, on p. 5.
98. Bussy *Journal de Bussy*, p. 154.

99. 'Considérations sur l'Inde: présentée au Ministère de la Marine par Montigny, commandant de Chandernagor' (Messidor an 5 [July 1797]), AN: AE, B[3]459. See Chapter 4, above, pp. 82–4.
100. Raynal, *Histoire des deux Indes*, vol. 2, pp. 248–9.
101. B. Lavergne, *Une Révolution dans la politique coloniale de la France* (Paris: Mercure, 1948), p. 53; see also M. D. Lewis, 'One Hundred Million Frenchmen: The "Assimilation" Theory in French Colonial Policy', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 4 (1962), pp. 129–53, on pp. 134–7.
102. The First Treaty of Paris (30 May 1814) reinforced Article 11 of the Treaty of Paris (10 February 1763), AD, vol. 5.
103. Le comte du Blanc, 'Mémoire sur le commerce de l'Inde', AN: AE, B[3]459.
104. Anquetil Duperron, *Voyage en Inde*, p. 169.
105. [Hapdé], *La Chaumière indienne*, scene xx.
106. For a discussion of how French authors vicariously and epistemologically occupied the Indian space, see K. Marsh, *Fictions of 1947: Representations of Indian Decolonization 1919–1962*, Modern French Identities, 60 (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007), pp. 207–15.
107. Le comte du Blanc made exactly this assertion; see 'Mémoire sur le commerce de l'Inde', AN: AE, B[3]459.
108. Georgette David provides a short account of the use of the *comptoirs* as a political asylum; see 'Chandernagor et le Swadeshisme au début du XX[e] siècle: L'affaire Charu Chandra Roy', *RFHO*, 78 (1991), pp. 89–103. In 1935 Gandhi gave a speech in Pondichéry which celebrated democratic French India, stating that 'les libertés pour lesquelles nous luttons aux Indes depuis tant d'années sont déjà depuis longtemps accordées aux Indes françaises' (for a long time, the freedoms for which we have been fighting in India for so many years have already been accorded to the French Indies). In France, opponents of decolonization opportunistically used Gandhi's speech during the debates surrounding the cession of the *comptoirs* in 1954: M. Raingeard, 'Établissements français de l'Inde: Fixation de la date de discussion d'interpellations', 2[e] séance du 10 août 1954, *Journal Officiel de la République française: Débats parlementaires, Assemblée nationale*, 11 August 1954, pp. 4032–7, on p. 4035. See Marsh, *Fictions of 1947*, p. 138.
109. Anthony Strugnell makes passing reference to how the *Histoire des deux Indes* 'foreshadows' later debates on French colonialism; see 'The *Histoire des deux Indes*', p. 245. For a thorough discussion of France's 'liberating' and 'enlightened' colonial mission, see A. L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895–1930* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), esp. pp. 1–37.

Conclusion

1. [Roubaud], *Le Politique Indien*, p. 82.
2. See, for example, Voltaire, *Les Lettres d'Amabed*; and [Benouville], *Les Pensées errantes.*
3. For example, the histories by Canivet, *Les colonies perdues*, p. 172, and Lonchampt, *Dupleix et la politique coloniale*; and the fictional works by J. Gautier, *Une aventure coloniale au XVIII[e] siècle: L'Inde éblouie (Dupleix, de Bussy, La Touche)* (Paris: Colin, 1913), p. vii; and G. Delamare, *Désordres à Pondichéry* (1935; Paris and Pondicherry: Kailash Éditions, 1997), pp. 23–7.
4. See Chapter 1, above, pp. 16–17.
5. Launay, 'Mémoire sur l'Inde', [1800?]; AN: AE, B[3] 459. See above, note 40 to Chapter 1.

6. Le Gentil, *Voyage dans les mers de l'Inde*, vol. 1, pp. 177–8.
7. See Chapter 4, above, p. 77.
8. See above, pp. 31, 104, 109, 4.
9. M. Dubois, 'Préface', in G.-C. Vandelet, *Empire colonial de la France. L'Indochine: Cochinchine, Cambodge, Laos, Annam, Tonkin* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1901), pp. i–xv, on p. ix.

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